

# Elementary English

*A Magazine of the Language Arts*

NOVEMBER, 1961

READING



WRITING



SPEAKING



LISTENING



SPELLING



ENGLISH USAGE



CHILDREN'S BOOKS



RADIO AND

TELEVISION



AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS



POETRY



CREATIVE  
WRITING

WHY CHILDREN LIKE HORSE STORIES  
EASY-TO-READ TRADE BOOKS  
HANDWRITING TODAY  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARIES  
STANDARD ENGLISH



*King of the Wind*  
(See p. 473)

*Organ of the National Council  
of Teachers of English*

# Elementary ENGLISH

An official organ of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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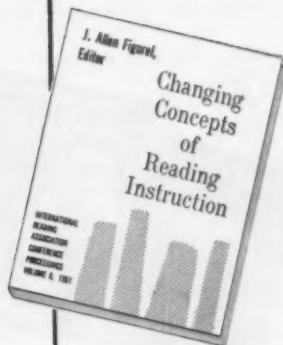
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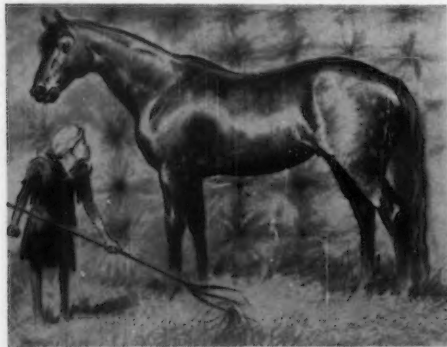
No. 7

BERNARD POLL

## Why Children Like Horse Stories<sup>1</sup>

Even a useless explanation of the apparently insatiable desire of children for horse stories would be better than none at all. If not practical, it might at least offer us perspective and patience.

It is of course not true that horse stories have more of those qualities which appeal to children than do other kinds of stories. Stories about horses share with others those elements which are attractive to children: excitement, suspense, action, plot, a strong character with which to identify, and so on. A satisfactory explanation of why children demand horse stories, as heavily as we know they do, must show why it is the stories with the horse as the main character and not other types, which are in greatest demand.



Mr. Poll is Head, Children's Department, King County Public Library, Seattle, Wash.

<sup>1</sup>Illustrations from *King of the Wind* by Marguerite Henry. Copyright 1948 by Rand McNally & Company, Publisher.

Consider the tremendous security in having as the object of one's affection and interest a mammal who seems to return one's love no matter what whim, irritation or little perversion distort one's feelings toward it! Imagine never to be rejected when one falls short, but always to be loved with utter consistency. It is a delicious thought, for a child quite irresistible, momentous and, probably, rarely fulfilled even in much better times and cultures than our own. The horse is a larger mammal with whom the child can identify, one with whom he can rest with utter security.

My solution, then, is that the horse, and therefore the horse story, attracts children because of the role it plays in fulfilling these needs. The qualities of writing and features of plot and development, therefore, are irrelevant to an explanation of why children like horse stories. They want horse stories because they need what the horse symbolizes.

This feeling of children toward the horse is also evidenced in children's desire for pets. A boy and his dog is the traditional symbol of uncompromising, unqualified interchange of affection. Horses are better because they are larger, stronger, and more powerful. They overwhelm with their strength and love, or are felt to do so by children.

No proof is offered for this hypothesis. Evidence could be brought to bear, perhaps by comparing the reading interests of children in other cultures, or children in



areas which have not had associations with the horse. My appeal, for the truth of this view, is to your intuitive inspection based on your own experience with children.

These needs on the part of children, which horse stories may tend to fulfill, are certainly not conscious. Nothing could be more ridiculous than to assume that children are conscious of any of this reasoning. If the truth of the view rests in any degree upon conscious decision or awareness, even remotely like this explanation, on the part of children, then it is certainly wrong. But unconscious motivation is now a truism of psychology. It needs only to be proved in a particular instance.

Other animals as central characters beside the horse, could probably fill this role. Whales and bears, for example, might do this, but they usually suffer by being unknown in their psychological traits, like the really affectionate whale, or they may be thought to be dangerous, like the unjustly maligned bear (see Seton's great *Biography of a Grizzly*).

The wise and serious doctor in Butler's great book *The Way of All Flesh* prescribes for Ernest . . . "a course in the larger mammals. Don't let him think he is taking them medicinally, but let him go to their house twice a week for a fortnight, and stay with the hippopotamus,

the rhinoceros, and the elephants, till they begin to bore him. I find these beasts do my patients more good than any other." The doctor's patients were both too sophisticated for horse stories, and their problems perhaps more urgent and of a somewhat different nature. The idea, however, is the same: acquaintance with those animals fulfills a basic need and therefore helps cure a condition.

This hypothesis implies no necessary aspersion on parents. They have *their* conditions and problems which may be reflected in *their* reading demands.

It does have the advantage of focusing one's attention on the social basis for demands for types of books. Societies have neurotic patterns as do individuals and what people read is symptomatic of their problems. It is an exciting advantage, which I am claiming for this view, that it stimulates thinking about the social milieu of book demands.

In the meantime, as a practicing children's librarian, my policy is to provide as many copies, as my budget and other quality demands allow, of the best horse stories, *Smoky* and *King of the Wind*, to name two of long-time favorites.



# An Evaluation of Some Easy-to-Read Trade Books for Children

Many primary teachers are aware that, in recent years, some of the largest publishing houses in the United States have greatly increased their production of easy-to-read books for young children. The idea of simple reading materials for older children who have difficulties with reading has been used for at least thirty years but the printing of many easy, single books for beginning readers is relatively new. These books are now sufficiently familiar and widely used that some appraisal of their worth seems to be in order. Accordingly, the present study is an evaluation, on a multiple basis, of a sample of ten popular, easy books for primary children. It is not concerned with the many valuable books ordinarily read to children by parent or teacher.

The books were analyzed in the present study on the basis of (1) a subjective description of content and estimate of attractiveness and interest (2) an objective comparison of vocabulary (3) a rating by the Spache Readability Formula (8) and (4) comments on the books by groups of first- and second-grade children and their teachers.

The ten books evaluated are listed in the bibliography. The sample is small but the books were chosen because they or their authors are well-known, and because they varied in such categories as main

theme, publisher, date of publication and apparent difficulty. The results of the analysis should be of value to teachers and curriculum directors in determining the place of these books in a total reading program in the primary grades.

## RELATED WRITING

Librarians, teachers and critics have long been concerned with quality in children's books. In the very first issue of the *Horn Book* in 1924, Alice M. Jordan wrote, "mediocrity in books for children is more universal and more baffling to combat than sensationalism." The upsurge in production of easy-to-read trade books has been so recent, however, that there has not been time for thorough study of the new books. Two staunch supporters of children's literature have recently suggested criticisms. Arbuthnot said, "Just at present we are suffering from a rash of thin and themeless narratives for the youngest children. There are books about night sounds and daytime sights, smells, tastes, coldness, wetness, and what not . . . They may be good language experiences occasionally, but their lack of humor and substance send the average child searching for something meatier—an honest-to-goodness story, not another so-what book." (1)

Jacobs (4) too calls for quality in terms of vocabulary, content, and craftsmanship. He says the critical reader of the easy-to-read books "may be dismayed that this trend in publishing is off to a rather dismal start, characterized to a great extent by lack of originality, patterned plots, bloodless characters, stilted language patterns

David H. Russell is Professor of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Children Learn to Read*, *Children's Thinking*, and other books and articles and is a past president of the American Educational Research Association. Mary Cogswell, Anne Cuno, Juanita Poppe and Thelma Reese, all of the Berkeley Public Schools, assisted in the study.



... untenable moralizing." He believes that publishers may be "putting into print too much that is banal and unimaginative" but, on the other hand, "there is evidence that, if one takes the pains to be selective, there are some new books for the beginning reader which are genuinely worth the child's time and attention." The procedures used in this study may illustrate one way that a group of teachers and librarians can discriminate between the valuable and the trivial.

One objective study of trade books for beginners was that conducted by Condit (2). This investigator reduced a group of 759 titles proposed by children's book editors and reading lists to 246 titles which graded up to 3.3 on the Spache readability formula. These were placed in school libraries and rated by 99 children in the first and second grades. Their comments and those of the librarians were incorporated into descriptions of the books. Condit provides a useful description of books divided by placement at first grade (8 titles), second grade (88 titles) and third grades and supplements this with a list of untested but more recent books. Criteria used in the qualitative analysis included children's interests and literary and artistic merit. "Not forgotten were the more prosaic but intensely important qualities of vocabulary, structure and physical format." Condit found that only about 5 per cent of the books analyzed were suitable for the average first-grade reader and about 30 per cent for the second-grader of average reading ability.

### THE SETTING

Trends are elusive and subjective, but the increased production of these trade books seems to be related to an increasing do-it-yourself emphasis in curricular ac-

tivities (7). This trend may be a result of teacher shortage and increasing size of classes in some areas with the consequent need of finding devices to break down mass instruction. It may be related to current interest in individualizing reading activities. A do-it-yourself emphasis may also be connected to current interest in teaching machines as devices for promoting certain kinds of rote learning, a movement which may be part of a larger trend described by Finn (3) as "the development of a technology of the instructional process." The inclination to stress reading by oneself may be partly a product of an educational psychology which puts increasing emphasis on individual differences. These and other factors currently support a do-it-yourself trend of which independent reading from individual books may be a part.

In addition to these possible broad influences, specific support of individual reading by Lazar (5), Miel (6), Veatch (9) and other writers coupled with publishers' advocacy of the materials to librarians and teachers have created considerable interest in easy trade books. The present torrent of books makes evaluation by teachers, library committees and curriculum committees especially desirable.

### SUBJECTIVE APPRAISALS OF CONTENT AND FORMAT

As a group, the ten volumes are attractive, durable and likely to interest many primary children. A few descriptive impressions of each title follow:

#### Chandler: *Cowboy Sam and Porky*

Included here as an example of a series book high in interest and low in difficulty. Authentic cowboy material. Short sentences and somewhat monotonous three-color illustrations. Major concept: he who



does not work should not eat. Simple rather than literary.

Freemans: *You Will Go to the Moon*

Modern factual content with rockets, space stations, and "moon cars." Doubtful use of "dish hole" for craters; other difficult concepts such as rocket stages, gravity and "push." Seems better adapted to teacher-and-group discussion than individual reading in second or third grade except perhaps for a boy very interested in space travel. Attractive pages.

Guilfoile: *Nobody Listens to Andrew*

This book may be easier than the Spache rating indicates because of the brevity of the text. The unity of plot is expressed in the title. Everyday concepts such as walking the dog and cutting the grass in a story told and illustrated with humor.

Hoff: *Danny and the Dinosaur*

A live dinosaur from the museum turns out to be more adapted to modern life than the textbooks indicate. Both story and pictures have the humor associated with the well-known cartoonist. Short lines make text a bit "chopped up" but content has a delightful appeal to fantasy.

Lenski: *The Little Farm*

Included as an older, easy book still popular with children. Short text with illustrations that help explain difficult concepts such as *pasture*, *orchard*, *firewood* and *bobsled*. Factual but appealing.

Minarik: *Little Bear*

A story in four short chapters told with a warmth and literary quality superior to most of the other books in this list. Somewhat like traditional folk tales with Little Bear getting new clothes and making birthday soup. A few hard concepts such as *Viking ship* and *tunnel* and probably

somewhat harder than the publisher's claim of first-grade difficulty.

Minarik: *Father Bear Comes Home*

Included as an example of a later book in a series. Continues warm, folk quality of previous book with some unusual words such as *octopus*, *mermaid*, and *hiccup*. Same format and about same difficulty as *Little Bear*.

Seuss: *Green Eggs and Ham*

Included as a recent publication and as an attempt at a very easy book. The Seuss imaginary animals and pictures carry a simple rhyming text without much point. Probably the easiest, and most repetitious, of the books analyzed. Content seems trivial.

Seuss: *Cat in the Hat Comes Back*

Geisel's lively pictures and animals make this and the previous *Cat in the Hat* book a favorite with many children. This one introduces letters of the alphabet as little cats who clean up the house and clear away snow. Some teachers object to the continuous use of an unsubtle fantasy in these books but many parents and children like them.

Stolz: *Emmett's Pig*

More story quality than most of the other books with the central character a boy who lived in a city apartment and wanted a pig. Combination of city and country life appealing to many children. "Straight" story and illustrations make this a somewhat more conventional juvenile book than most of the others, but a superior one.

The subjective analysis suggests that these books are usually pleasing in appearance, well printed and illustrated, and that they vary tremendously in theme and specific content.

### OBJECTIVE COMPARISONS OF DIFFICULTY

Neither the difficulty nor the desirability of children's stories can be judged by numerical measures but some qualitative judgments are given above and numerical appraisals produce part of the evidence about difficulty.

Table I suggests that the books being evaluated differ considerably in length and in number of different words used but tend to cluster around the high first or low second grades in difficulty as measured by the Spache Readability Formula. A comparison between Tables I and II suggests that the basal reading texts, even by the end of the preprimer levels, contain much more material in the form of total words than do the trade books (which seem closest in size to a second preprimer). Such a finding may be criticized as repetitiousness in the text of the readers or praised as redundancy making for better communication of ideas and greater ease of reading. The research evidence is not clear regarding the amount of practice in context a child needs to make new words his own nor about the density of concepts in reading material that he can grasp and enjoy. Some of the trade books on the list, such as *Green Eggs and Ham*, employ considerable repetition. In general, their shorter text provides a variety of ideas and therefore may be judged more interesting to many children than books of limited content which aim at practice in reading abilities. By the time the child has read three preprimers and a primer of a basal series he has read an amount equivalent to at least five of the trade books; the five first-grade books of a basal series are roughly equivalent in amount of reading material to the ten trade books. The list price of one group of five texts totals about \$5.50; the total for the ten trade books (with approximately

the same amount of material) about \$18.00. It may be repeated that these are numerical, not qualitative, appraisals.

The Spache Readability Formula is probably the best single measure of difficulty of primary materials. It gives no place, however, to the attractiveness of format nor to the difficulty of concepts introduced. On this single basis the books tested range in difficulty from that of a basal primer to that of the second level of a second reader. Most of the books tested seem suitable for average readers in the second grade, a fact which verifies Condit's point that most trade books are difficult for all but the most superior readers in a typical first grade. The finding is of interest in relation to the judgments of teachers and pupils who used the books for a month in the present study.

### JUDGMENTS OF PUPILS AND TEACHERS

The ten books were placed in two second-grade and two first-grade classes for approximately a month each between November and February. They were used for individual, recreational reading and kept on an accessible shelf or table. When the children finished a book in the second grade they filled out a short evaluation blank with answers to one or both of "What I liked about this book" and "What I did not like about this book." In most cases the first grade children had difficulty with writing a meaningful comment and dictated their opinions to their teachers at convenient moments. Pupils in the second grade also dictated some reactions. During the month the teachers made informal notes about use of the books and children's responses to them. The two schools in the study are in middle-class neighborhoods with a variety of ethnic groups represented in the schools. The average IQ in the two schools is, however,

Table I  
Numerical Analysis of Ten Trade Books

	Pages Containing Text	Total No. Words	No. Different Words	Grade Placement —Spache
Chandler: <i>Cowboy Sam and Porky</i>	60	1272	89	1.6
Freeman: <i>You will Go To Moon</i>	53	1242	186	1.9
Guilfoyle: <i>Nobody Listens to Andrew</i>	20	368	104	2.1
Hoff: <i>Danny and Dinosaur</i>	60	837	263	2.4
Lenski: <i>The Little Farm</i>	23	236	97	2.9
Minarik: <i>Little Bear</i>	50	629	200	2.2
Minarik: <i>Father Bear Comes Home</i>	50	1540	192	1.9
Seuss: <i>Green Eggs and Ham</i>	37	795	50	1.8
Seuss: <i>The Cat in the Hat Comes Back</i>	50	1675	241	2.1
Stolz: <i>Emmett's Pig</i>	44	1655	338	2.0

Table II  
Numerical Analysis of First- and Second-  
Grade Materials of Basal Reading Series

	Pages of Text	Total No. of Words	No. Differ- ent Words	Grade Place- ment—Spache
Series I				
First Preprimer	45	404	19	1.3
Second Preprimer	61	1211	42	1.5
Third Preprimer	69	1743	56	1.5
Primer	184	7061	155	1.8
First Reader	216	12,102	326	2.1
Second Reader 1	257	20,896	552	2.4
Second Reader 2	242	23,039	775	2.7
Third Reader 1	294	30,486	1097	3.0
Series II				
First Preprimer	47	323	17	1.3
Second Preprimer	63	819	38	1.4
Third Preprimer	71	1400	58	1.5
Primer	157	6100	158	1.7
First Reader	189	10,592	335	2.1
Second Reader 1	267	20,152	564	2.3
Second Reader 2	235	22,995	879	2.9
Third Reader 1	315	34,085	1280	2.9

somewhat about normal and it seems probable that the average IQ in the four classes ranged around 106 to 112. The qualitative reactions described below are based on

114 responses by the children and the notes of the four teachers:

1. The books are enjoyed most by children at the second- and third-grade levels

of reading ability. Both first-grade teachers reported little independent reading, even by their best readers, in the fifth and sixth months of the first-grade. One first-grade teacher (28 in class) reported that about one-half the group read part of a book and about six pupils read a whole book by themselves. The children did not seem to be interested in the books at least until they were reading at the primer level under the teacher's guidance. The second-grade teachers reported that their two top groups enjoyed the books; about ten in one class and six in the other only looked at the pictures in them.

2. The children's favorable comments far out-number negative criticisms of the books. Both first- and second-graders wrote many more reasons for liking than for disliking the books. One of the common replies to "What I did not like about this book" was "Nothing." The chief reason for liking a book was "It was funny." A few children said, "I can read—and no one is helping me." The boy who commented "I read all those books and I don't like any of them except *Danny and the Dinosaur*" was in a very small minority.

3. In the first and second grades, reasons for liking a book are usually stated in terms of specific incidents rather than the whole story. "I liked it when the dinosaur was bending over for people to get on his back" (*Danny and the Dinosaur*); "When he was eating the cake in the bathtub" (*Cat in the Hat Comes Back*); "There really was a bear" (*Nobody Listens to Andrew*); "The part about floating through the air" (*You Will Go to the Moon*); "I liked the farm part" (*Emmett's Pig*); "I liked the place he hunted" (*Cowboy Sam and Porky*); and "When he had the tea party" (*Little Bear*.) Incident rather than plot makes a good book at this level of development.

4. Negative comments were concerned largely with difficulty: "It was a little hard for me"; "The pictures were better than the words"; "Some hard words." Some second graders who may have been good readers were sometimes a little superior: "It was too easy and too thin"; "It was too easy and kind of silly"; "It did not tell enough." There were few negative criticisms of any sort in the two first-grade classes.

5. A listing of the favorite book or books and the least popular titles does not have much meaning for the small sample studied but Hoff's *Danny and the Dinosaur* was out in front in the number of times it was reported. Well back in second place was Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* although the earlier *The Cat in the Hat* was already known to some of the children. Other favorites were *Little Bear*, *Green Eggs and Ham* and *Nobody Listens to Andrew*. The *Little Bear* books apparently ranked somewhat lower in the children's estimates than they are rated by children's librarians. *Cowboy Sam and Porky* and *The Little Farm* were not valued as highly as most of the other books. One teacher attributed this to the unfamiliarity of the content in *The Little Farm*. Another teacher believed that *You Will Go to the Moon* was "pitched too high" for her first grade.

6. The teachers believed that the books stimulated some pupils' interests in reading. The first-grade teachers reported interest in handling books, seeing the pictures, and enjoyment of specific incident and character rather than appreciation of a whole story. One first-grade teacher reported girls' enjoyment of *Little Bear*, boys' interest in the science of *You Will Go to the Moon*, and the liking of both for the animals in the stories. Each teacher reported a number of children who did not read or enjoy the books but indicated

fairly general approval and considerable stimulus to more reading.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. The rise of easy-to-read trade books may be related to the increasing interest in school materials of some trade publishers, to the current emphasis on the individualized reading program, and to a wider concern with do-it-yourself activities in school learning.

2. The easy-to-read books here evaluated include both factual and fictional material, attractively written and illustrated. They vary widely in format, difficulty and literary merit.

3. Increasing numbers of such easy-to-read books probably make it possible for children to do more independent reading at an earlier age than they could attempt five or ten years ago. However the books still do not provide for the children at the beginning of the process of learning to read.

4. The preprimers and primers of the basal reading series are easier to read than most of the easy-to-read books examined in this study. Comparisons made on the basis of total vocabulary, vocabulary repetition, format, and the Spache Readability Formula all suggest that the representative sample of easy-to-read books analyzed here corresponded in difficulty to first readers and second readers (level one) of two well-known basal series.

5. On the average, any one trade book evaluated here provided about as much reading material as a second preprimer in a basal series. A primer or first reader provided more material and a greater variety of ideas than one trade book. A trade book may have more style and develop one theme or concept more completely than is done in a primer but not necessarily more than is contained in a unit in a first or second reader.

6. The amount of material in the ten trade books corresponds approximately to the amount in the five books of one of the first-grade basal reader programs. The cost of the trade books is about three times that of the first-grade readers.

7. On the Spache Readability Formula the trade books analyzed ranged in grade placement from 1.7 to 2.9. Although labelled "easy," like other school books they vary considerably in difficulty. Their variety is even more evident in their content, ranging through cowboys, dinosaurs and space travel. If the difficulty of the book is known, and a number of books are available, the teacher can use the trade books to stimulate children's interests in a variety of topics in a way that may not be possible with the more conventional textbooks.

8. Excellent physical format and general attractiveness are found now both in the textbooks and in the juvenile trade books. Any five of the easy-to-read books have more variety in illustration and typography than basal reading materials for first grade. At present there is no objective evidence that one type of material is intrinsically more attractive or more teachable than the other on the basis of physical format.

9. The trade books analyzed vary in difficulty but seem to be suitable for a few superior readers near the end of grade one, average or superior readers in the second grade or average and below average readers in the first half of the third grade. A few superior readers in first grade enjoyed the books on the basis of specific incident and character rather than the story as a whole. Many children read a few pages of a book rather than the complete text. Problems of writing both texts and trade books for first-graders have not yet been solved completely.

10. In relation to attitude, favorable reactions to the ten books far out-number



children's negative criticisms, especially among first-graders. Negative comments are concerned largely with difficulty of the materials, favorable comments with amusing incidents.

11. The general attitudes of pupils and teachers suggest that a shelf of good trade books in a classroom is a stimulus to interest in reading. The larger question of the value of an individualized program or the place of trade books in a total primary program was not within the compass of this study. The evidence is clear, however, that children in first grade need materials easier than the trade books now available, whether in the form of experience charts, the children's own writing, mechanical devices still to be perfected, or beginning basal materials. Evidence is also needed about the reading skills that can be developed with children using trade books.

Within the limitations imposed by sample and method, this study verifies the judgments of Arbuthnot, Condit and Jacobs that trade books labelled "easy-to-read" vary considerably in difficulty and in quality. The selected books used were not, in the words of Jacobs, "banal and unimaginative" but they varied in content from the trivial to the important, from the contrived episode to the story told warmly and humorously. The methods used here may be helpful to a curriculum group or a library committee who have the responsibility for determining book purchases for a school system.

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# Handwriting Practices In Our Schools Today

Recently, I conducted a survey among 680 superintendents of towns above 2000 population in four midwestern states. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain the degree to which handwriting is being emphasized in our schools today. The questions on the survey were brief and pertained to the (1) presence or absence of a formal handwriting program; (2) program being used; (3) time spent teaching handwriting; and (4) required training of teachers in handwriting.

## FIVE BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS

To maintain an effective program in handwriting in the elementary school, five basic understandings are essential. These understandings are enumerated below and discussed briefly:

1. A statement of philosophy in regard to the importance of effective handwriting instruction in the elementary school.
2. A formal program established through teacher concern for a good program.
3. An orientation of the total staff to the program.
4. Meaningful in-service training in the teaching of handwriting.
5. Evaluation.

Instruction and practice are essential in the development of handwriting as a tool. This is a generally accepted fact. Yet, frequently, leadership and guidance in this area are overlooked by busy school administrators. The typical school system does

little more about its handwriting program than to provide the teacher with a few materials. Many do not even do this, as the present survey indicates.

Handwriting is one of the basic fundamental subjects in the elementary school curriculum. The staff of each school or school system should go on record as to how they view the teaching of handwriting. What importance do they attach to it? What is their philosophy of teaching handwriting? This needs to be defined early and definitely by the administrator and his staff. This is a responsibility that cannot be overlooked.

The philosophy of the Rochester, Minnesota, staff is implied in the list of objectives that appears in the Rochester Handwriting Course of Study. It states:

"Handwriting is a skill which provides the individual with a means of recording and communicating his thoughts.  
Our handwriting program is designed to instill in each child:

The need for legible handwriting

An understanding that handwriting skills function in every writing activity

A background of experiences which will give meaning to his handwriting

The interest and ability  
to develop motor skills  
to use tools and materials correctly  
to adjust his speed according to need  
to evaluate his progress for self-improvement  
to preserve the art of manuscript writing

---

Mr. King is Director of Instruction, Rochester, Minnesota, Public Schools.

A greater interest in the value of handwriting

The feeling of pride in his own handwriting

The appreciation of the contribution handwriting has made to mankind"

Does your school system have a list of objectives that points out specifically the degree of importance that you feel toward handwriting instruction?

### THE FORMAL HANDWRITING PROGRAM

The second understanding basic to the formation of a well-organized handwriting program is the need to evaluate materials and research now available so that teachers and administrators have a background for thinking about the type of program they want for their children. Once this has been done, a school system can proceed to set up a formal program and begin to work with its staff to develop the understandings and skills they need.

The formal handwriting program will probably be one that is commercially developed. Years of research and experience have gone into the building of such programs. The curricular individuality of school systems can be shown by the way in which they build their programs around these adopted materials.

A specific, somewhat formal, program is essential to good, efficient handwriting instruction. I would define an organized handwriting program as a system of teaching and evaluating handwriting agreed upon and followed by the staff. As I reported earlier in the *National Elementary Principal*,<sup>1</sup> a good handwriting program

would contain many of the following characteristics:

1. A definite writing readiness program that begins in kindergarten and continues through the first part of grade one.

2. A system of manuscript letter formation that is followed by all who teach manuscript writing.

3. A transition-to-cursive period flexible enough to meet individual needs but definite enough to be generally adhered to.

4. Materials that have been studied and accepted by the staff, including: kinds of writing paper to be used at various levels of the program; kinds of pencils and pens to be used; and wall cards, charts, and overlay materials, if desired.

5. Teachers' manuals that best follow the handwriting course of study developed by your staff.

6. A clear picture of the skills to be taught at different levels throughout the program.

7. A knowledge of how the material at each level fits into the total program.

8. A plan to retain correct manuscript writing throughout the grades for use in appropriate situations, in addition to a strong program in cursive writing.

### STAFF ORIENTATION

The third understanding basic to a well-defined handwriting program is the need to keep the staff alert to the expectations of the administration in regard to the results pupils achieve in the program. This would include not only working with new, inexperienced teachers, but providing direction and suggestions for veteran teachers. Quite often, comments to the latter group will be in the form of praise for work well done. However, it is not outside the realm of possibility to recommend to staff members that they enroll in a handwriting course. This is an accepted responsibility of good school administrators.

<sup>1</sup>"Improving the Handwriting Program." *The National Elementary Principal*. 38:16-18. February, 1959.

Orientation of new staff members to a local handwriting program is most essential. Many things confront the inexperienced or the new staff member. Each can be a problem of major importance if we let it. Reassurance to the teacher that the school has a handwriting program which will be reviewed with her later will ease her mind, at least in one area, until you can follow through and discuss the subject with her rather thoroughly. Although I've singled out handwriting for my subject in this instance, I realize that principals and other administrators feel responsible to discuss all aspects of their school program with their new teachers for orientation purposes.

### TRAIN YOUR OWN

In-service training in the teaching of handwriting is essential to improvement of instruction in this area. In Rochester, each elementary school teacher takes an in-service course in handwriting. This course is taught by staff members who are outstanding teachers of handwriting. The course extends over a period of twelve weeks, one hour per week and each class member begins with basic manuscript readiness material and proceeds through the transition to cursive and then through a program of extensive cursive writing instruction.

The results of this type of in-service program are very evident to one who visits our classrooms. Handwriting lessons are on display in almost every classroom and teachers are proud of the efforts of their pupils.

### EVALUATION

Finally, evaluation of any program is essential. This certainly holds true in the subject of handwriting.

The handwriting program can be evaluated in several ways. Before an evaluation

is made, however, it is necessary to know what is to be evaluated. Some teachers feel that legibility or speed are the important characteristics of handwriting. Others might evaluate in terms of beauty or character of handwriting. Still others are concerned with posture, position, and movement in handwriting.

Generally, today, we strive for legibility above all, with perhaps speed being listed most often as the second most important quality to base our evaluation on. Many feel that speed of writing can be greatly increased without sacrificing legibility.

Self-diagnosis and evaluation on the part of the student is a good means of measuring progress. It also serves as an excellent source of motivation.

Many administrators evaluate the progress of their programs by keeping cumulative handwriting folders for each child from grade 1 through grade 8. These become a ready reference for the teacher who must play an important role in the evaluative procedure.

Some school principals request that a set of papers or the consumable books from each handwriting class be sent to him once every month or so; not so that he can criticize, but because he is interested and wants the teacher and pupils to know of his interest. It would be well if he could take time to write a comment here and there on the papers or in the books as he reviews them.

The opaque or overhead projector is an excellent tool for evaluation of handwriting. Usually, the teacher has discussed the types of mistakes she would have her pupils avoid. If the pupil's handwriting paper or English theme is inserted in the projector and shown on a screen, he and others can readily indicate errors in letter formation, slant, or cramped spacing, that he should try to correct.

## CURRENT PRACTICES

To determine the extent to which school administrators are concerned with the handwriting program today, a survey, through superintendents of all cities above 2000 population, was made in four mid-western states. Survey forms were mailed to 680 cities, and although a few blanks are still being returned, this report is based on those now available, 505, or a 75% return.

In answer to the question, "Do you have a formal handwriting program?" the responses were as follows: Yes 394 No 111.

A further analysis shows that 30% of all the school systems surveyed have no formal handwriting program. This indicates they neither use one of the established commercial programs nor have they organized a formal program of their own. It would be interesting to know how many school systems who answered "yes" support their programs with any of the activities mentioned earlier. In many cases teachers are frequently left to shift for themselves in the area of handwriting. An adopted program is important but it's not enough. More than a little effort should be put forth in the use of the adopted program if it is to prove to be effective.

There was some curiosity on the author's part concerning the materials available commercially today, so this question was asked: "What handwriting system do you use?"

Responses to this question revealed that fourteen commercial handwriting systems are being used in these four states. They are listed alphabetically below:

Benson	Noble
Cole	Palmer Method
Economy	Scott Foresman
Hale	Seale
Kittle	Steck
Laurel	Webster
McCormick-Mathers	Zaner-Bloser

It was interesting to note that the handwriting materials of two companies are being used by 89% of the cities that have formal programs. Eleven per cent of the cities responding use a total of twelve different handwriting programs. Undoubtedly, additional systems of handwriting may be found in other sections of our country.

The amount of time devoted to the teaching of handwriting is important. The author was interested in comparing the Rochester time allotment with that of other communities. The following responses were given in regard to time spent per week teaching the formal program.

<i>Minutes Per Week</i>	<i>Schools Reporting</i>
75 or more	75
50-75	176
50 or less	57
no time designated	135

Over the years, it has seemed to me that a minimum of 50 minutes per week should be devoted to organized formal handwriting lessons, if pupils are to make good progress. This survey reveals that 59% of those reporting feel the same way. The percentage is probably actually higher since "no time designated" does not mean that those responding in this manner spend less than 50 minutes per week in handwriting. I do feel, however, that it would be well for those 135 school systems to reconsider the need for a closer defined program of teaching handwriting. This is a job that cannot be done in an "incidental" fashion.

The earlier discussion of the importance of in-service training in the teaching of handwriting prompted the inclusion on the survey of this question: "Do you require your elementary teachers to have had a course in handwriting?" Responses were: Yes 38 No 437, or 9% who do require some kind of handwriting training.

(Continued on page 493)

# Vocabulary and Sentence Study of Eight First Grade Science Books

The vocabulary of science textbooks extends beyond that found in most basal reading series. The vocabulary difficulty is probably most pronounced in first-grade science texts. Are specific words used so consistently in different first grade science books that they can be anticipated? Do these books differ markedly in reading difficulty level? This study partially answers these vexing problems.

In this study, the difficulty of science textbooks is evidenced by the number of new words presented, the number of new words found only in specific texts and the per cent of the total vocabulary represented by these words, comparison of different words presented with well known vocabulary lists, and the application of the Spache Readability Formula.<sup>1</sup>

A first-grade science vocabulary list was compiled from eight current science textbooks with publishing dates from 1957 to 1961. Words were selected according to the following criteria: (1) Words must occur in at least six of the eight texts studied. (2) Words must be used at least four or more times in each book. (3) Pluralized words are new words if they are pluralized by adding other than *s*. (4) Possessive words are new words if they are formed by adding *'s* or *s'*. (5) Hyphenated words are separated and counted alone. (6) Words which are made by adding variant endings to common root

words are counted separately (e.g. help, helper, and helping are three different words). (7) Compound words such as good-night are two words. (8) Numerals are words (e.g. 1 is counted as one word).

Proper names of characters, pets, and toys were not listed because they are not common from one series to another. The number of times each word appeared in each of the eight science texts was counted and recorded alphabetically.

The sentences in the same science books were selected and enumerated according to the following criteria: (1) Single words or combinations of words that did not make complete sentences were not counted. These included captions for pictures, section and chapter headings. (2) The ends of sentences were denoted by periods, question marks or exclamation points followed by capital letters.

Four hundred and fifty-one different words appeared in all eight textbooks. Only sixty-one of these words appeared in six or more texts. This basic science word list for first grade appears in Table I.

Fifteen of these sixty-one words were common to all eight of the first-grade science books studied. These words are indicated by asterisks (\*).

Each word in the science word list was checked with the Dolch List and the Gates Lists to determine difficulty.<sup>2</sup> The symbol (D) was placed alongside a word to indicate its appearance on the Dolch list. The

Mrs. Denslow teaches first grade in the Lansing, Michigan, Public Schools.

<sup>1</sup>George Spache, *Good Reading for Poor Readers*, The Garrard Press, Champaign, Illinois, 1960. pp. 116-125.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Dolch, *Teaching Primary Reading*, The Garrard Press, Champaign, Ill., 1941. p. 205. Arthur I. Gates, *A Reading Vocabulary for the Primary Grades*, Columbia Univ., New York City, 1935.



TABLE I  
THE 61 WORDS A FIRST GRADER  
WOULD MEET IN HIS SCIENCE TEXTBOOK

a	(D, G-1)	have	(D, G-1)	plants*	( , G-1)
air	( , G-2)	he	(D, G-1)	put	(D, G-1)
all	(D, G-1)	help	(D, G-1)	see	(D, G-1)
and*	(D, G-1)	here	(D, G-1)	seeds*	(D, G-1)
animals*	( , G-1)	homes	(D, G-1)	some*	(D, G-1)
are*	(D, G-1)	how	(D, G-1)	sun	(D, G-1)
at	(D, G-1)	in*	(D, G-1)	the*	(D, G-1)
big	(D, G-1)	is*	(D, G-1)	them	(D, G-1)
birds	(D, G-1)	it	(D, G-1)	they*	(D, G-1)
can*	(D, G-1)	know	(D, G-1)	things	(D, G-1)
did	(D, G-1)	light	(D, G-2)	this	(D, G-1)
do*	(D, G-1)	like	(D, G-1)	to	(D, G-1)
eat	(D, G-1)	look	(D, G-1)	trees	(D, G-1)
find	(D, G-1)	make	(D, G-1)	up	(D, G-1)
flowers	(D, G-1)	many	(D, G-1)	water	(D, G-1)
foods*	( , G-1)	night	(D, G-1)	way	(D, G-1)
for	(D, G-1)	not	(D, G-1)	what*	(D, G-2)
go	(D, G-1)	of	(D, G-1)	where	(D, G-1)
grow	(D, G-1)	on	(D, G-1)	will	(D, G-1)
has	(D, G-1)	out	(D, G-1)	work	(D, G-1)
				you*	(D, G-1)

\* Words appearing in all 8 first-grade science textbooks.

D Words appearing on the Dolch Basic Sight Vocabulary List.

G-1 Words in the first 500 on the Gates Primary List.

G-2 Words in the second 500 on the Gates Primary List.

symbol G-1 denotes its appearance in the first 500 words of the Gates list and G-2 signifies its appearance in the second 500. These markings denote a rough estimate of the word level difficulty.

Most of these extremes are shown in Table II. One science textbook introduced 52 different words in contrast to another textbook utilizing 253 different words. The number of words used four or more times in various first-grade science books arranged in ascending order are as follows: 52, 118, 152, 162, 178, 209, 245, and 253. The average number of words introduced initially was 171.

The individual textbooks varied in number of words not in common with any other

text from Scott Foresman with 8 words to Singer with 48 words.

The Spache Readability Formula measured the vocabulary in terms of hard, rare, or long words, and the sentence structure in terms of complexity and length.<sup>2</sup> The average grade placement derived through using the formula indicates the average reading ability needed for adequate comprehension of an individual book.

Average sentence length (Note Table III) ranged from 4.3 words to 6.7 in first-grade science books as compared to 5.5 to 9.3 first grade readers in Kearney's

<sup>2</sup>George Spache, *Good Reading for Poor Readers*, The Garrard Press, Champaign, Ill., 1960, p. 116.



TABLE II  
LIST PRESENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME  
IN EACH OF 8 FIRST-GRADE SCIENCE TEXT

Series	Total Number of words Used 4 or More Times	Total Words Found In No Other Text	Per Cent of Words Found In No Other Text
Scott Foresman	52	8	15%
Heath	118	15	13%
MacMillan	152	43	28%
Winston	162	30	19%
Ginn	178	31	17%
Singer	209	48	23%
Lyons & Carnahan	245	21	9%
Scribner	253	17	7%

Note: This table should be read as follows: Scott Foresman has a new vocabulary of 52 different words, 8 of these words are found only in this series and they comprise 15% of the Scott Foresman's total vocabulary.

TABLE III

Series	Total Number Of Different Words Introduced	Average Sentence Length	Average Grade Placement	Range of Difficulty In Terms Of Months
Scott Foresman	52	5.1	1.6	1.6-1.8 (2 mo.)
Heath	118	5.1	1.6	1.4-1.3 (4 mo.)
Singer	209	5.1	1.6	1.5-1.8 (3 mo.)
MacMillan	152	5.4	1.6	1.4-1.8 (4 mo.)
Winston	162	4.3	1.8	1.4-2.1 (7 mo.)
Scribner	253	6.7	1.8	1.6-1.9 (3 mo.)
Ginn	178	5.8	1.8	1.5-2.1 (6 mo.)
Lyons & Carnahan	245	6.5	1.9	1.6-2.1 (5 mo.)

study.<sup>4</sup> The average of the average sentence lengths for first-grade science books was 5.5 words as compared to 4.5 for pre-primers, 5.7 for primers, and 7.3 of first readers in Kearney's study of first grade readers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Nolan Charles Kearney, "Sentence Length," *Journal of Educational Research*, Feb. 1945, pp. 447-461.

<sup>5</sup>Nolan C. Kearney, "Sentence Length," *Journal of Educational Research*, Feb. 1945, pp. 447-461.

It is interesting to observe on Table III that in one book the average sentence isn't longer than 4.3 words, in three books not longer than 5.1, in one book not longer than 5.4, in one book not longer than 5.8, one book not longer than 6.5 words and in one book the average sentence isn't longer than 6.7 words.

The science textbook with the smallest number of different words used four or more times does not always have the short-

est average sentence lengths. Singer (See Table III) is a good example of a book while having average short sentences, has a relatively large number of total different words used four or more times.

The range of difficulty of four 100-word samples per textbook was 2 months to 7 months (See Table III). The range of difficulty within a book and the difficulty of the hardest sample are important.

In Spache's opinion, books of first-grade level in which samples vary more than six months are not appealing to reluctant readers.<sup>6</sup> Differences of more than 7 months between four 100-word samples from one book are evidenced on Table III. Text samples vary from 1.6 to 1.8 (range of 2 months) in one series in contrast to 1.4 to 2.1 (range of 7 months) in another text. There are two texts on this table which fit into this category; however, these same books will challenge the fast learner.

The average grade placement ranged from 1.6 to 1.9. The average grade placement in various first-grade science books arranged in descending order are as follows: 1.9, 1.8, 1.8, 1.8, 1.6, 1.6, 1.6, and 1.6.

Table III reveals that four first-grade science textbooks appear to require the same average reading ability for adequate comprehension. A closer examination of the range of difficulty of the samples (See Table III) indicates that the samples of one textbook vary two months while another's samples vary three months, and the other two textbooks' samples vary four months.

The number of words introduced and the grade placement may not confer the entire picture of the difficulty of the textbook in relation to other science texts used as companion or supplementary material. The

book with the smallest number of words per sentence does not have the smallest total of different words, the lowest average grade placement or the smallest range of difficulty of the samples. Winston is a good example of a textbook having short sentences (4.3), a high average grade placement and a great range of difficulty in four 100-word samples. In contrast, Singer introduced 209 different words, has an average sentence length of 5.1 words, average grade placement is 1.6 and the range of samples is 3 months. Unusual word combinations found in 3, 4, or 5 word sentences may be more difficult than longer sentences.

First-grade children are likely to meet the words on the basic science list (See Table I) in their science textbooks. The list of 61 words common to 6 or more of the texts composes a basic list for usage by those teachers employing numerous textbooks in their first-grade developmental reading and science programs in group activities such as charts, word games, and word drills.

The analysis exemplified that grade designation by the author or publisher does not necessarily present an accurate representation of the vocabulary burden and sentence encumbrance of the text. If teachers satisfy the children's individual differences, they must be certain of the vocabulary and sentence content of the material.

The transition from a first-grade science text with an average sample range from the simplest to the hardest less than three months to another first-grade science text with the range 1.4 to 2.1 respectively, may represent an increase in difficulty that is too great for many of the pupils. Thus, in designing a science outline for first grade, it is essential to know the specific words introduced in each text as well as the actual vocabulary computation and sentence complexity.

<sup>6</sup>George Spache, *Good Reading For Poor Readers*, The Garrard Press, Champaign, Illinois, 1960, p. 125.

# The Child, A Creator

Every child is born with the power to create. Self-expression can come from the child at any age if he is stimulated to feel the urge to give it utterance.

The law of life is toward expression. The plant expresses itself in bud, flower and seed; the animal in offspring. Man, alone, may express himself in ideas, and in proportion to his ability to give such expression to his ideas he finds satisfaction in life.<sup>1</sup>

Every child enjoys exercising his natural impulses to create through investigation and communication. The teacher with an insight to the needs of the child will accept the theory of growth through self-expression and self-activity.

In order for a child to become creative in the field of language arts he must have nature and nurture. If teachers can stimulate the child in some way to see the world about him—things—people—events, freshly and clearly, they will help to enrich every day of his life.

As soon as children begin to talk they attempt the language of literature. All during the early years when they are struggling with the language there come occasional flashes of achievement. Parents have always known this. Children have a language adequate for all purposes, but it is not often discovered or recognized.

Hughes Mearns in his book, *Creative Power*,<sup>2</sup> tells of parents sending him numerous creative expressions. One mother tells of tucking in her small son as he says,

Mother, did you see the sun go to bed?  
He pulled the wooly white covers up over  
his head—  
Are his blankets soft and white and warm  
just like mine?

At another time Gretchen thinking of clouds, says, very very slowly,

I see white clouds floating by  
As though sheep in a meadow  
I see a man wave his crook  
In a deep blue shadow.  
I see the house  
Where the shepherd lives.

This, of course, is literature! All the elements are here: rhythm, design, unique insight, and the perfect picture of thought and feeling. Most people are surprised that this can be called poetry because it lacks rhyme. Rhyme is wonderful, but it is wholly unnecessary in making poetry. The child will have no difficulty with literature if he has a chance to develop his own native gift in language.

The child poet—without knowing that he is a poet—weaves to his song the music of the world and clouds.<sup>3</sup>

A teacher who is interested in developing creative expression in children may be helped by the suggestions of G. A. Swift:<sup>4</sup>

1. Fundamental in releasing the creative talents of pupils in the preparation and background of the teacher. The teacher must have imagination and resourcefulness along with a fund of information and insight in order to "pollenize" and enrich the experiences of the child. The teacher who is well rounded out with personal experiences in poetry, music, art, love of

Mrs. Hardy is principal of Fullerton School, Houston, Texas.

<sup>1</sup>Alma Paschall, "What is Creative Expression?" *The Elementary English Review*, vol. XI, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>Hughes Mearns, *Creative Power*, chapter VII p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid*, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup>G. A. Swift, "Creative Expressions," *English Journal* vol. XXVIII, p. 31, 1938.

nature and love of the beautiful—whose soul is in tune with the best things in life—will find a good response from pupils in creative expression.

2. In order to have creative expression, there must be a self to express. There must be a definite effort on the part of the teacher, to provide those experiences in the life of the child which will develop his various senses of observation, appreciation, imagination and judgment. Many children are unable to enjoy their own emotions for various reasons. Many have been ridiculed for expressing sentiment while others have had those finer urges suppressed because of lack of appreciation on the part of adults.

3. The stage must be set for good results in any kind of teaching but more importantly for creative expression. There should be provision for planning periods, personal conferences with pupils and opportunities for rich reading experiences. Each child should have opportunity to choose the type of expression which will be meaningful to him. Encourage the habit of keeping notebooks to jot down ideas and inspirations which are stimulating. When a child has a real urge for creative effort, the schedule should be flexible enough that he might set about the creative development at the time when the inspiration strikes him.

4. Plan for group activity. Creative activity for the group is equally important to that for the individual.

5. The atmosphere of the schoolroom needs to be charged with stimulating experiences. There is need for library material in our schools. Well-selected books and pictures and a time arranged in the schedule for free-reading periods will be helpful.

6. Materials in the classroom should be closely related to child experiences.

7. Acquaint students through reading or hearing read various types of patterns of creative expression.

8. Use the social-studies units as a spring board for all sorts of new experiences. From this material will come inspiration for creative expression.

9. Avoid sarcasm and criticism. Many a child loses confidence in himself because of criticism.

10. Avoid placing emphasis on mass production. One line of real poetry is worth tons of trite verse.

11. Develop appreciation in each child for the efforts of the others of the group.

12. Encourage children to feel that writing is a privilege to be enjoyed rather than an infliction to be endured. If they are saturated with experiences the creative urge will come easily.

"Does creative writing belong in the elementary grades?" "Can children do creative writing before they have mastered the mechanics of writing?" The answer to both questions is, "Yes." The teacher needs only to be conscious of the fact that the creative abilities are within the child and she must provide an atmosphere in which the child will have a fair chance to work.

The curriculum should provide such activities as trip and information gathering nature experiences, and dramatic and free play. A time must be set aside for conversation about these activities. Children should hear many, many stories and poems. They should be given an opportunity to tell their original stories.

According to Grace M. Parkinson a child is poetic before he is prosaic; therefore, he should be given every opportunity to express his poetic feelings.

The teacher's part in this development is to put the child in contact with beauty, and guide his sensitiveness to the beautiful, to provide a literary background which will

enable him to express himself; and to arrange situations that he may have experiences from which his expression may flow.<sup>5</sup>

Some samples of creative expression given in the morning exercise in the Carew Street School in Springfield, Massachusetts are given below. A child remarked,

Last night I saw buttercups  
Nodding their heads saying  
Goodnight to me.

Another child said,

Yesterday I saw a tall  
White pine  
Reaching up to the sky.

A third contributed,

Sunday when I was riding  
the trees were so pretty  
With the sun shining through  
The leaves.

Developing the imagination is an important part of the background for the creative. Through the ages every race has expressed itself rhythmically. The teacher leads a child to see that repeating a word

<sup>5</sup>Grace M. Parkinson, "Creative Expression Through Poetic Language," *The Elementary English Review*, vol. VIII p. 27.

or phrase often makes the effort sound better. Not much rhyme will come naturally in grades one or two except with a child who has the gift of fluent expression.

Original plays have the advantage over those made from a story. The original plays express the exact dramatic level of the children who make it. From the ages of five until nine years the children feel no hesitation in making plays. If the teacher is alert and wise she will seize every opportunity to help children see dramatic possibilities. Creative writing should be justified by the fact that it will provide for the development of the talented child.

Creative teaching seeks to stimulate in each individual, and to strengthen in him, the God-given inner urge to express himself creatively.<sup>6</sup>

Let us nurture this God-given urge in children—help it flower as the "lillies of the field in all their glory." Let us be wise in our understanding and lead our children to an intelligent and significant freedom through *creative expression*.

<sup>6</sup>F. F. Struck, *Creative Teaching*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1938.

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The results indicated here are probably typical. It does not seem feasible to me that we as school administrators can be nonchalant in the training of our staff in specific areas, whether handwriting, science, or history. If we hire teachers who are

inadequately trained, we have an obligation to the public to increase the efficiency of these people by training them within our own systems. Perhaps the 91% answering this question negatively have not bothered to ask their teachers if they've had training in handwriting.

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## Elementary School Libraries<sup>1</sup>

The development and use of independent work-study skills has been a problem of the junior and senior high schools for many years. Oftentimes, the major problem has been one of taking time at this stage of education to teach and refine the work-study skills as related to library usage.



Learning skills in library usage has been the primary concern of the junior high school pupil. The general procedure has been for the skills to be taught jointly by the English teacher and the librarian. They cooperatively develop a program for the child to use the skills.

It has been the desire of the elementary school administration in the Wayzata (Minn.) Public Schools to introduce, teach, and develop independent use of the library before the children finish the sixth grade. The program is continuous from the kindergarten through the sixth grade and calls for cooperative action on the part of the elementary school librarian, the elementary school teacher, the elementary school ad-

ministration, and the public librarian in the city.

Before embarking on the project of full-time librarians in each elementary school, a list of the services to children and to professional staff was developed to serve as a job analysis in employment. The services to children included: training in use of library resources, books, pamphlets, and magazines; training in citizenship, social adjustment; interest in books fostered thru circulation; enrichment of the curriculum; training in research; reading guidance; broadening of reading interests; book talks, displays, individual counseling; care of library materials and other responsibilities of users; give book talks and present new materials to help develop new interest, develop discrimination; have an atmosphere conducive to child use; building and maintaining a resource center for teacher use. The services to the professional staff were to include: consulting teachers in selection of materials; developing bibliographies for teachers; promoting cultural and functional growth of the staff; indexing and organizing teaching materials; resource in library skill development; developing library collections for room library use as resource units; attending grade level meetings as



Mr. Corliss is Director of Elementary Curriculum, Birmingham, Michigan, Public Schools.

<sup>1</sup>Photographs are of the sixth grade class, Beacon Heights School, Wayzata, Minnesota, Mrs. Palma Foss, teacher.



a resource person; establishing the library as a work center, reading room and a materials laboratory, a resource center for books, magazines, pictures, maps, and audio-visual materials; and creating an atmosphere conducive to teacher use.



Other services to school related activities were to include: provide resource and reference center for P.T.A., clubs, and administration; cooperate with public library; sponsor field trips during Book Week; furnish bibliographies of available materials; work with other librarians and community leaders in planning and developing an over-all library program for the community or the area; and, provide atmosphere conducive to lay persons' use.

The skill development program for children, aimed at independent use of the library, was to be a cooperative endeavor on the part of the classroom teacher and the elementary building librarian. It was determined that the library should be one of the important places where work-study skills are applied on an individual, small group, or class basis. The following outline indicates the scope and sequence of skill development for library skills.

#### KINDERGARTEN

1. Listening to stories
2. Reading stories from pictures
3. Access to many easy, well-illustrated books

4. Re-telling stories, observing sequence
5. Handling books properly
6. Awareness of pleasure in books
7. Acquaintance with old favorites
8. Visits to school and public library

#### FIRST GRADE

1. Reading stories within child's reading level, silently or orally
2. Appreciation of relationship of illustrations to study
3. Thinking of books in terms of possible ownership
4. Discovering public library facilities
5. Access to an attractive library corner
6. Regular library periods for enjoyment of books
7. Observation of library rules: quiet behavior, clean hands, returning books to proper place

#### SECOND GRADE

1. Awareness of books as a source of information
2. Acquaintance with stories of humor
3. Telling stories that have been read and enjoyed
4. Insight into the contributions of illustrations to knowledge
5. Access to room collections of interesting books
6. Continued use of library corner
7. Learning proper methods of handling books and the techniques of opening a new book
8. Visits to school and public libraries

#### THIRD GRADE

1. Increased range of reading interest
2. Access to fable and folk lore
3. Appreciation of the color and beauty of good illustration
4. Awareness of the function of libraries as sources of information and pleasure

5. Training in finding books grouped according to special interest
6. Use of titles and tables of contents as aids in finding materials
7. Observation of library rules
8. Extended use of public library facilities

#### FOURTH GRADE

1. Access to books dealing with children of other lands
2. Introduction of use of encyclopedia
3. Function of index and guide words in using reference material
4. Practice in locating books in school library
5. Observance of good library rules
6. Emphasis on year-round use of public library

#### FIFTH GRADE

1. Access to many books dealing with the American Heritage
2. Access to biographies on various reading levels
3. Effective use of encyclopedias
4. Acquaintance with the Newberry and Caldicott Award books
5. Facility in use of the table of contents, index, and card catalog
6. Learning library methods of grouping books under the terms FICTION AND NON FICTION
7. Observance of good library rules
8. Continued emphasis on year-round use of public library

#### SIXTH GRADE

1. Acquaintance with the Dewey Decimal system of book cataloging
2. Appreciation of the infinite resources which books offer
3. Continued use of table of contents and card catalog

4. Student assistants in maintenance of school library and circulation of books
5. Observance of rules of good library conduct
6. Locating materials in reference books
7. Continued use of public library facilities

Some practical outcomes of this program has been realized. They include: when a particular unit of work makes it necessary for a class visit to the library the teacher and librarian may plan a worthwhile visit; the librarians compile short bibliographies for pupils and teachers for units; the librarians circulate annotated bibliographies of new reference and professional books; the librarians arrange to circulate current professional magazines; the librarians work in the classrooms as well as in their libraries to encourage attitude and usage; and, the librarians help develop usage of the public library facilities; the librarians serve the buildings as resource persons for audio-visual aids and equipment. Many of the fine educational services not seen at the outset of this program, have developed and aided the elementary schools to attain an excellent record in reading progress as well as development of the independent work-study skills.

Independent reading in the elementary schools has grown tremendously since the program of full-time qualified librarians for each elementary building has been in-



(Continued on page 505)

## Standard English as a Foreign Language

Although the battle of prescription versus description in matters of teaching Standard English were fought out and pretty well won during the thirties and forties, the fact remains that the average teacher in the high schools and more particularly the elementary schools (not to mention in the colleges and universities!) still remains in the prescriptive camp and has no real understanding of the concept of Standard English and no systematic way of teaching it. That this is the case is only too evident if one does a tour of duty teaching extension courses in "grammar" to practicing teachers, especially in smaller cities and rural areas of the United States. It is true that many teachers may be inclined to leniency with respect to individual items such as *it's me*, but their attitudes toward usage are still those of the 18th century, and they continue to approach the problems of usage primarily as they occur in writing.

Why is this still the case after the hundreds of books and articles have been written on the subject and after the innumerable courses in "grammar and usage" to be found in any college or university? The fault lies, it seems to me, in the approach, or lack of an approach, to teaching Standard English in the schools, especially the elementary schools, and in the failure of our education schools and English departments to train school teachers, especial-

ly elementary school teachers, in any realistic way.<sup>1</sup>

What I have to say in the following paragraphs concerning Standard English itself will be nothing new, of course, to the majority of readers of this journal, but what I suggest by way of approaching the problem of teaching Standard English may be more original and worth considering.

Let us begin by making a series of distinctions so that the central problem facing the teacher of Standard English can be better isolated. First, speech and writing must be distinguished. That is, the reality of any language is to be found in its spoken form, and writing, on the mechanical level, is merely a way of representing language on paper. Second, grammar and usage must be distinguished. Every native speaker of English speaks "good" grammar in the sense that he has an automatic or habitual control of the structural patterns of the dialect of English he speaks. I say the

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<sup>1</sup>It is reported in the NCTE publication, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961), that the typical college preparing elementary teachers "requires only two or three semesters of work in language or literature in addition to the freshman course" and that "94 per cent of the colleges fail to require work in the English language" (p. 48). As for high school teachers, the report says that "only 17.4 per cent of the colleges require a course in Modern English grammar" and that "fewer than 200 institutions are graduating [high school] teachers of English informed about modern language study" (p. 60). Although I have no statistics to back me up, my impression, based upon fairly wide contact with many members of a variety of university English departments, is that the average university professor of English has not taken systematic work in Modern English grammar and is uninformed about modern language study.

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Dr. Clubb is Associate Professor of English, Montana State University, Missoula.

dialect he speaks because, as is well known, there is a variety of English dialects both geographical and social. For our purposes here, let us say that there are three broad geographical dialects spoken in the United States: in New England, in the South, and in the rest of the country. Also for our purposes here, let us recognize that there are two social dialects spoken in each of these broad geographical areas: Standard and Non-standard. Since there are plenty of books and articles available which discuss the terms *Standard* and *Non-standard*, let us say simply that Standard Spoken English is that dialect of English spoken in any one of the three geographical regions by the people who carry on the affairs of the community: the people, generally speaking, who have the most education, the professional jobs, and usually the power or position to set the standards of behavior for the communities. Non-standard English is the dialect or dialects spoken by the rest of the people in the region. This means, then, that broadly speaking there is no national standard spoken English but three regional standard spoken English dialects; similarly, there is no single non-standard spoken English, but three regional non-standard spoken dialects.<sup>2</sup> Further, the only standard of what is a "correct" pronunciation, a "correct" grammatical pattern, or a "correct" meaning for a vocabulary item in any one of these regional standard dialects can be whether or not it occurs regularly in the particular dialect under consideration.<sup>3</sup>

So far, we have been talking about spoken English. Written English, on the mechanical level, is simply a means of representing spoken English, and, there-

fore, we can say that Standard Written English is the representation of Standard Spoken English, and that Non-standard Written English is the representation of Non-standard Spoken English.<sup>4</sup> As it happens, most of the differences between the various regional standard English dialects tend to disappear in writing so that for all practical purposes there is a national standard written English. A further distinction, which is not our concern here, is that there are certain differences between the grammar of Standard Spoken English and the "grammar" of Standard Written English. That is, certain grammatical forms which occur characteristically in Standard Spoken English do not occur in Standard Written English, and vice versa.

Assuming that the reasons generally advanced for teaching Standard English as we have labeled it are valid, what is the problem which faces the elementary school teacher? It is really very simple. To make it easy, let us say that half of the students who enter a first grade class room already more or less speak Standard English, because they have associated with people who speak it. The teacher's problem for these students is to teach the mechanics of representing Standard English in writing—that is, spelling—and ultimately the differences between the grammar of Standard

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<sup>2</sup>It is at this point in any discussion of the problem of Standard English with teachers that confusion often develops, if it has not already. In effect, the situation will be something like this: a teacher is teaching in a community where Non-Standard English is the standard and therefore feels free to go ahead teaching what the people who carry on the affairs of the community use; moreover, the teacher herself probably speaks the non-standard "standard." The answer to the first part of the problem is fairly obvious: that the teacher must assume a broader point of view for developing the concept of standard. The answer to the second part is more difficult and involves a teacher retraining program.

<sup>3</sup>This, too, is something of an oversimplification, but it serves my purposes.

<sup>4</sup>This outline of the dialect situation is, of course, a gross oversimplification, for which each region many other dialects can be distinguished. But for my purposes here, it is sufficient to talk in broad terms.

Spoken English and the grammar of Standard Written English; the student then will be writing Standard English. But the other half of the students who enter first grade will be speaking Non-standard English, because they have associated with people who speak it. The teacher's problem here is a different, more difficult, one. If she begins immediately to teach the mechanics of representing speech in writing, the student will be writing Non-standard English because he will end up representing his Non-standard Spoken English. This is generally what happens for these students, and the problem of writing Standard English continues for them through high school—if they get that far—and becomes more and more difficult for each succeeding teacher to handle, because the place to attack the problem of Non-standard English is not in writing in high school, but in speech in elementary school.

I would suggest that the problem which faces the first grade teacher whose class is made up of half Non-standard speakers is a foreign language problem for that half and should be treated as such. A great deal has been learned in recent years about teaching foreign languages, and it seems to me that much of what has been learned could be brought to bear on the problem of teaching Standard Spoken English and Standard Written English. Standard Spoken English is a foreign language for a great many students. Why not at the very beginning in the first grade separate these students from the others for thirty minutes to an hour a day and teach them Standard Spoken English as a foreign language? Properly done, no psyches would be harmed and much would be gained. Assuming that the teacher has a proper comparison of Standard Spoken English and Non-standard Spoken English of the region and the necessary drill materials, she could concentrate upon the special problems of

the Non-standard speaker without boring those who already more or less speak Standard English. She could use an oral-aural method of drill concentrating upon grammatical patterns (where most of the problems would be). She could use pattern practice drills which have been found so useful by teachers of French, Spanish, or what have you. And she could force the student to become automatic in his use of the proper grammatical patterns when the occasion occurs for him to use them, just as the student of French, when properly taught, becomes automatic in his use of French grammatical patterns when the occasion occurs for him to use French.

In our schools today, there is no systematic procedure for teaching a student to *speak* Standard English. The teacher does little more than "correct" a *he don't* or a *them things* and expect the student to remember to say *he doesn't* or *those things* the next time he has occasion to use the patterns. It is only after the student has learned the mechanical process of writing that the teacher and textbooks attempt any kind of systematic approach to the problem. But their approach is entirely unrealistic because it consists of memorization of rules (often false rules) and of problem-solving drills, both of which processes the foreign language teacher has found little better than useless as teaching devices.

At the risk of oversimplification, let us point out that there are two elements in language: the element of choice, which we can call meaning, and the element of compulsion or habit, which we can call the rule of the language.<sup>5</sup> In our every day use of our native language or dialect we are concerned consciously only with meaning: whether to say "yes" or "no" in a given situation or whether to say "There're many books on the table" rather than "There're

<sup>5</sup>See W. Freeman Twaddell, "Meanings, Habits, Rules," *Education*, 69 (October, 1948), 75-81.



many stones on the table." As native speakers of Standard English we are not consciously aware of the rules of our dialect: whether to say "There's many books on the table" or "There're many books on the table." We say the latter out of sheer habit. If, as nonnative speakers of a language or dialect, we are conscious of the rules of the language, we become distracted and lose sight of the meaning; and communication or expression breaks down. In short, as teachers of Standard English as a foreign language, what we want to do is render automatic and habitual the rule of the dialect and this can be achieved only by certain kinds of drills which inculcate *habits* of speech, and these habits of speech will carry over as habits of writing. Let us go back to the first grade classroom again.

First graders are notoriously unself-conscious and would enjoy oral drill, both in choral and individual recitations necessary to make habitual the new patterns of the new dialect. Naturally, a foundation would have to be laid by the teacher in that she would have to explain that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the non-standard dialect the students speak, that there are certain occasions when the student will naturally speak his native non-standard dialect but that there are others when he will find it better to speak his new standard dialect, that as he learns to write he will have to write the standard dialect, and so on. (Motivation is the teacher's problem, the teacher's art; but it can only be imparted if the teacher *knows* what she's doing.)

The best drills foreign language teachers have discovered for instilling habits are known as pattern practice drills, and for Standard English as a foreign language, the drills would look something like the following: Suppose the teacher wants to make automatic the use of *there are* and *there is*. The problem, of course, is that the

student wants to say, "There is *two spoons* on the table." We can set up a series of key frames thus:

There's *one spoon* on the table.  
 There're *two spoons* on the table.  
 There's *a spoon* on the table.  
 There're *spoons* on the table.  
 There're *some spoons* on the table.  
 There're *several spoons* on the table.

The teacher will say each one of these sentences and then ask the class to repeat each orally. Next she can ask for individual repetition. Then she can extend the exercise by giving a series of cues, words which will substitute in the patterns: *toast, dishes, bread, dishes, forks, two vases, several napkins, some food*, etc. This can be varied further as follows:

Cue: How many spoons are there on the table?

Response: There're *two spoons* on the table.

Cue: Is there a spoon on the table?

Response: Yes, there's *a spoon* on the table.

Cue: There's . . .

Response: There's *a spoon* on the table.

There's *a dish* on the table.

Cue: There're . . .

Response: There're *forks* on the table.

Or take another example: Our problem here is that the student says *them things*. We can set up a series of frames:

I don't like *that thing*.

I don't like *those things*.

*That book's* on the table.

*Those books'er* on the table.

The students will repeat these and similar frames after the teacher, and then the teacher can proceed thus:

Cue: *That man* is my friend. *Men*.

Response: *Those men* are my friends.

Cue: *That thing* is on the table. *Things*.

Response: *Those things* are on the table.

Pattern practice drills such as these could be set up to drill students on all the problems involved in learning to speak Standard English. They, of course, have to be used in connection with other types of exercises and incorporated into systematic lesson plans. Here I am only interested in illustrating.<sup>6</sup> It should go without saying, that the basis for any drill upon Standard English must be a realistic description of Standard English patterns. Further, most of the teachers in the elementary schools would have to be retrained to use the new procedures — and in many cases to use Standard English themselves! And at the same time teachers could be introduced to the principle of the phoneme to aid them in teaching spelling and reading more

realistically.<sup>7</sup> Retraining institutes patterned after the NDEA Language Institutes would prove very useful for this.

Standard Spoken English as a foreign language for some students would probably have to continue for a number of years, but as they learned the mechanics of writing in the same classes along with the standard speakers, they would be learning to represent the standard grammatical patterns which they have learned to use automatically in speech. They would probably be one step ahead of their native standard speaker brothers when they come to punctuation, for having been practicing orally the patterns they are learning to write, they would be more conscious of the various types of intonation patterns, which do have at least some tie-in with punctuation.

It seems to me that the procedure just outlined would have distinct advantages: it would isolate the problem students and the students' problems from the beginning, and it would enable the teacher to handle the problems in a systematic way, unlike the hit-or-miss procedure currently at work in our classrooms. And, finally, it would hit at the problem of usage where it is most centrally located—in speech.

<sup>6</sup>There is a sizeable body of literature on the subject of modern methods of teaching foreign languages with many suggestions which would be useful for teaching Standard English as a foreign language. See John Carroll, *The Study of Language* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 168-92.

See journals such as *The Modern Language Journal*, *Hispania*, and *Italia*.

See books such as Charles Fries, *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (Ann Arbor, 1945) and Nelson Brooks, *Language and Language Learning* (New York, 1960).

See textbooks such as MLA, *Modern Spanish* (New York, 1960) and Charles Fries, *Patterns of English Sentences and Cumulative Pattern Practices* (Ann Arbor, 1953-55).

<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Carroll, *op. cit.*, 146-50 and Leonard Bloomfield, "Linguistics and Reading," *Elementary English Review* 19 (1942), 125-30, 183-86.

### A Poem of the Wind

by Paula Vance

I love the wind so mild and free.  
I love the way it dances with ease.  
I love the wind and all the seas,  
Because of the way they dance with ease.

*Paula Vance wrote this poem last year while she was a third-grade pupil in the Jonathan Maynard School, Framingham, Mass. Her teacher was Mrs. Pauline Gilman.*

# A Study of Two Readiness-for-Reading Programs in Kindergarten

The work of the kindergarten makes important contributions to the preparation of children for reading instruction. The degree to which the kindergarten should be consciously devoted to the development of readiness for reading is uncertain, and practice varies from school to school.

The present study was designed to provide needed information to those schools in which it is assumed that reading readiness is a definite responsibility of the kindergarten. Specifically, it investigated the question, Does a kindergarten child show more readiness and potential for reading after he has been through the readiness books of a basal reader program or after he has had an activity program of experiences?

## RELATED LITERATURE

Hester has suggested that basal reader readiness books should be used for one period in kindergarten or first grade, and that such use will insure careful introduction to the skills needed for successful reading. (4) Artley cites the values of readiness workbooks in encouraging language development. (1) On the other hand, the *Iowa Elementary Teachers Handbook on Reading* points out a danger in the use of readiness books: that the experiences may not be as significant to the children as those planned by the teacher herself. (7)

Concerning the value of experience programs, Lambert suggests that when meanings are derived by the child from first

hand experiences, he brings a keener skill in comprehension to his reading tasks. (9) Hymes believes that kindergarten children are kept busier, and experiences are more meaningful to them as they are involved in making signs and labels, recording stories, painting, and planning and carrying out trips, experiments, dramatizations, and the like. (6)

## THE PRESENT STUDY: POPULATION AND METHOD

The population of the present study consisted of two groups of kindergarten children, twenty-eight each in number (fourteen boys and fourteen girls in each), in a suburban school in St. Louis County, Missouri. The study was conducted during the school year 1959-1960. The twenty-eight children comprising the control group were selected from the morning class; their program centered around the Scott, Foresman *We Read Pictures* readiness workbook. (3) The experimental group consisted of twenty-eight children selected from the afternoon class, their program grew out of the children's interests and provided freedom to participate in various activities. The selections were made on the basis of age; children in the experimental and in the control group were paired so that the mean age of both groups of girls was five years, six months, and of both groups of boys, five years, nine months. Both groups used the same classroom and were taught by the same teacher, the junior author of this report.

The groups were evaluated prior to the beginning of the study by means of the Reading Readiness section of the *Metro-*

Dr. Blakely is Assistant Professor of Education at Drake University. Mrs. Shadle is teacher of kindergarten in Riverview School District, St. Louis County, Missouri.

*Metropolitan Readiness Test*, Form R (5); and informal Reading Readiness Appraisal Check List; and a Maturity Check List (2). The last-named measure was administered in November, 1959; the other two were administered in January, 1960.

The experimental and control programs were introduced following the administration of the series of preliminary measures. The two programs are perhaps best identified by listing daily activities typical of each.

#### Experimental Program (Experience-Activity)

Free play: clown box, building blocks, doll corner, toy trucks, and trains.

Individual evaluation of free play; "show-and-tell" things accomplished.

"Good Afternoon" song; taking roll; discussion of weather; noting birthdays; sharing things brought to school; telling of news events.

Activity period: rhythms, rhythm band, songs, finger plays, rhymes.

Activity to correlate with unit in progress: poem; telling or reading of a story; displaying pictures; listening to a record; playing a game.

The following is illustrative of the development of units of activity in the experimental program. When some of the children brought toy automobiles to the classroom, the collection of such automobiles was begun. The colors of the automobiles were noted. Pictures of automobiles, buses, trucks, etc. were displayed. Later some of the pictures were pasted in a book, called *Our Automobile Book*. The *Giant Nursery Book of Things That Go*, and *The Big Car and Truck Book* were introduced. There were dramatizations and discussions concerning safety and the importance of the traffic policemen and patrol boys; creation of verse; and the use of songs and rhythm band selections involving the sounds of horns, motors, wheels, and brakes.

#### Control Program (Basal Series Readiness Workbook)

Take roll, discuss weather, change calendar, note birthdays, tell news events. Review rhymes, songs, poems, and finger plays.

Directed use of readiness workbooks in one group; quiet activities, alternate group.

Reversal of groups for directed use of readiness workbooks and quiet activities.

Story time.

In May, 1960, the children in both groups were again evaluated by means of the Reading Readiness section of the *Metropolitan Readiness Test*, Form S; the Maturity Check List; and the informal Reading Readiness Appraisal Check List. In addition, the *New Basic Reading Test to accompany We Read Pictures* (10) was administered to both groups.

## RESULTS

Statistical results were evaluated by use of the test of significance of differences between means for matched pairs of subjects. (8) The .05 level was chosen as the criterion of significance.

Table I shows that there were no significant difference between the experimental and control groups at the beginning of the study, as measured by the three selected instruments.

Table II shows that the total experimental group made a greater mean gain during the period of the study, than did the total control group, on the Maturity Check List, the Reading Readiness section of the *Metropolitan Readiness Test*, and the informal Reading Readiness Appraisal Check List; and that the differences in gains were statistically significant on the first- and last-named of these measures. Table III shows that the total experimental group made a higher mean score on the Scott, Foresman end-of-the-book test than did the total

control group, but that the differences does not meet the criterion of statistical significance.

Tables II and III show that the experimental boys made greater gains on the three comparative measures, and higher scores on the Scott, Foresman end-of-the-book test, than did the control boys; and that the differences are statistically significant in the case of the *Metropolitan Readiness Test* (Reading Readiness Section), the Reading Readiness Appraisal Check List, and the Scott, Foresman end-of-the-book test.

Tables II and III show that there were no significant differences between experimental and control girls in gains on the three comparative measures, or in scores on the Scott, Foresman end-of-the-book test.

TABLE I  
Scores of Preliminary Evaluations  
of Readiness to Read

	Control Mean	Experi- mental Mean	Difference Exp.—Con.*
TOTAL GROUP			
Maturity			
Check List	15.4	14.7	-0.7
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	45.9	51.5	5.6
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	15.2	14.6	-0.6
BOYS			
Maturity			
Check List	14.3	14.1	-0.2
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	48.3	50.8	2.5
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	14.7	14.1	-0.6
GIRLS			
Maturity			
Check List	16.7	15.4	-1.3
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	50.8	53.0	2.2
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	15.6	15.1	-0.5

\*No differences significant

TABLE II  
Gains On Final Over Preliminary Evaluations  
of Readiness to Read

	Control Mean	Experi- mental Mean	Difference, Exp.—Con.
TOTAL GROUP			
Maturity			
Check List	2.5	5.4	2.9**
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	8.2	8.3	0.1
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	2.7	4.5	1.8*
BOYS			
Maturity			
Check List	3.3	6.0	2.7
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	7.7	9.4	1.7**
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	2.4	5.3	2.9*
GIRLS			
Maturity			
Check List	3.1	5.4	2.3
Metro. Readiness			
Test, Reading	8.9	7.1	-1.8
Readiness Appraisal			
Check List	3.0	3.9	0.9

\*Significant at .05 level

\*\*Significant at .01 level

TABLE III  
Scores On Scott, Foresman Test to Accompany  
*We Read Pictures*

	Control	Experi- mental	Difference, Exp.—Con.
Total (Mean)	58.6	61.1	2.5
Boys (Mean)	56.0	62.0	6.0*
Girls (Mean)	64.1	64.1	0.0

\*Significant at .02 level

## CONCLUSIONS

Limitations in the study are recognized:

(1) The study having been conducted in a kindergarten, results cannot be safely generalized to other grade levels.

(2) The study was limited to one school, in one locality.

(3) The measures of readiness may not



predict subsequent achievement of the students in learning to read.

(4) Although the experimenter made every effort to administer both programs conscientiously, she recognizes her bias in favor of the experimental program.

Qualified by the above limitations, the following conclusions seem justified:

(1) The experience-activity approach at the kindergarten level results in significantly greater readiness to read, in the case of boys, than does the basal reader readiness workbook approach.

(2) In the case of girls, readiness to read develops with equal efficiency under the basal reader readiness workbook approach or the experience-activity approach.

(3) Inasmuch as girls profit equally from either approach, and boys clearly profit more greatly from the experience-activity approach, the latter is to be recommended at kindergarten level in preference to the former.

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(Continued from page 496)

augurated. The measureable (Iowa Tests—S.R.A. Tests—Specific Reading Tests) growth and improvement in the reading accomplishment of the students has increased tremendously. The provision of the full time qualified librarian in each elementary school precludes the necessity of searching for a mechanical means to teach developmental reading. It allows a school system to adhere to proven methods of organizing classes and the program of learning without searching out some mechanical panacea. It is the answer to the teacher's prayer when it is properly used in individualizing instruction in reading.

Work-study skills (as measured by tests

and observation) have improved. The sixth grade student is almost an independent user of the library resources. The junior high school English teacher and librarian need only refine some of the specific skills and continue the trend toward full use of the library facilities.

The elementary school teachers, the elementary school administrators, the junior high school English teachers and librarians, are in total agreement that the employment of full time qualified librarians in our public schools has had a tremendous effect in upgrading all subject matter achievement and has contributed toward the goal of education—a self motivated individual with the skills to find knowledge, and apply it.

## "Two and a Half and Reading"

The practice of exploiting a child to satisfy his parent's ego leaves much to be desired, yet perhaps we are not tapping the limits of the baby mind. An indication of this is suggested by a little girl's unusual ability to discriminate between words when she was two and a half years old.

The following is a brief excerpt of Cindy's general development and of her behavior toward the printed word during a twenty-day period. An attempt is made to analyze some of the problems encountered by the child and her behavior in relation to these problems.

Cindy's motor and language development paralleled that of the average child. She spoke her first word shortly before her first birthday and spoke in short sentences when two years old. Her personality was typical of any two and a half year old, as described by Gesell and Ilg (2). She was ritualistic; she resisted all innovations; and at times her demands were so imperious that they could be tolerated graciously only if the rest of the household happened to be in good humor.

Keeping these personality characteristics in mind, it is understandable why her request for her "own words" could not be ignored. Conforming to her wishes, the word "Baby" was printed in one-half inch manuscript on a blank four by six card; her own name, "Cindy" was printed on the other side. Surprisingly, she seemed to discriminate between the two words immediately. She was very proud of her "own words" and she still remembered them on the following morning.

Curiosity prompted the writer to add two more words on subsequent days. Only

words that had meaning to her were chosen. During a two week period the following words were learned: egg, Janice, bell, cow, bicycle, wagon, see, dog, drive, car, play, swing, table, chair, Daddy, Mom, nursery school, dance, Michelle, shoes, penny, purse, cooky, I, root beer, baby, Cindy, banana, apple.

During this time, correct responses were praised lavishly; this praise was missing with the incorrect response. Generally, whenever she wanted to "read," all cards were reviewed with the use of a variety of techniques which were games to her. In going over the cards, if it appeared that she had forgotten a word, it was repeated for her; if it was felt that she really knew the word but teasingly gave the wrong answer, help was not given immediately. She frequently came up with the correct response after a moment or two. Incidentally, any threat to discontinue the game usually brought immediate results.

About twelve days after the "program" was started, Cindy lost interest and asked for no more new words. Consequently, very little attempt was made to coax her to go through them other than to show one or two skeptics that she could do it. She cooperated in this "showing off" but at other times would tease playfully and deliberately give the incorrect response, saying either "banana" or "Baby" to all cards. However, she did condescend to come forth with the correct answer if one was willing to wait through all her contortions, gyrations, and irrelevant activity and conversation which seemed to give her great enjoyment.

With this turn of events, the cards were neglected until May 5, 1960, approximately six weeks after the first word was presented.

Mrs. Cohan, of Oakland, California, is a former primary grade teacher.

At this time an attempt was made to determine Cindy's ability to recall the original words learned. On the initial trial, she made two or three errors; however, it is important to note that she was able to correct herself. She learned two new words, "kitchen" and "pencil," with some of her original enthusiasm; consequently, from May 6 to May 11, two additional words were presented each day. These words were: Grandpa, Grandma, Flower show, ball, doctor, swimming, bathing suit, and milk shake.

To reiterate, words chosen were those which had considerable meaning to the child and which were related to her recent or continuous experiences. A few of them were suggested by Cindy herself. It is doubtful whether she would have learned the words as easily if they had been relatively remote from her own experiences.

On May 11, 1960, an attempt was made to use the words learned in simple sentences with the incorporation of interesting pictures to illustrate each sentence. Cindy was very pleased when a scrapbook was given to her; however, the results were rather discouraging. During the first two days she did not seem interested in the sentences and even refused to recognize the words she already "knew" although written in an identical way. Paradoxically, she seemed to pick up "the" and "in" with no trouble. Nevertheless, Cindy was primarily interested in using the glue to add more pictures and "stories" to her book. On the third day, she was again persistent in getting to work on her scrapbook as quickly as possible. At this time, she rather reluctantly and hurriedly read a few words but only to expedite the beginning of the scrapbook activity, namely using the glue to add more pictures. Any attempt to coax her to read further brought deliberate wrong answers, "banana" and "Baby" still being her favorites. It is of interest to note

that she began asking the names of each letter in all the sentences and that while engaged in this pursuit, she went from left to right in both the words and in the sentences. Beyond this she was not interested in the reading activity and her attention wandered.

After starting the scrapbook, Cindy was no longer interested in going over the word cards. In an attempt to find out if there had been any loss, the writer used various tricks to keep her interested in reading the cards. She made one error (bathing suit) which she corrected herself after some prompting. The total learning period covered approximately twenty days with an average of ten or fifteen minutes daily.

#### *Analysis of Errors*

Early in the experiment, Cindy said "Mom" for "cow," "bell" for "Michelle." She saw the word "Dictionary" in the newspaper and said "That's Daddy," etc. Analysis of these errors reveals that she uses letters for clues; i.e., "Michelle" has a similar letter pattern as "bell," "Dictionary" and "Daddy" both have the same initial letter; and the "w" in cow is very similar to manuscript "m" in "Mom" when it is upside down. It should be noted here that she seemed to read equally well sideways, upside down, and right side up. To adjust for this, a star was placed on top to show which way was up.

"Grandma" and "Grandpa" were introduced not only because they had great meaning to the child, but to determine whether she would be able to differentiate between them with no specific help. As might be expected, she had difficulty distinguishing between the two words at first and it was necessary to call attention to the different configuration of the "p" and "m." Conversely, the introduction of "ball" which is very similar to "bell" caused

no difficulty; this may be because she specifically requested that "ball" be written on one of her cards. The introduction of new double words such as "bathing suit" caused some loss of other double words such as "Lake Tahoe"; and "swimming" was confused with "swing." Otherwise she seemed to have little or no learning difficulty. If a word started with a letter not used as the initial letter in the other words, such as "kitchen," she learned with only one repetition; words with the same initial letters caused more difficulty. It is interesting to note that she did not recognize, or perhaps did not want to recognize, the same words when they were written on the chalkboard. The necessary variation in size may have been a contributing factor.

It should be emphasized that the lavish praise that the child received with the correct answer had a great deal to do not only with her enjoyment of the game but also in the actual learning of the words. Without this praise, it is doubtful if any progress would have been made. Of course, her lively interest waned in a few minutes. This is understandable because the attention span of a child this age is very short, as pointed out by Guillett (3) and many others.

#### WHAT RESEARCH SAYS

Actually there is very little research on early reading ability; consequently, it is difficult to know what is the best method to approach or understand this rather unusual ability. Literature that is available in this area is largely anecdotal which involves very superior adults looking into their childhood, or a mother and father recalling a superior child's early interest in reading. The material is largely concentrated in the Terman study (5, 6, 7) who states that over one per cent of his subjects learned to read before they were

three years old, and that two and a half per cent learned before age five. Among the subjects in the study, a large majority stated that they received only incidental or casual assistance in learning to read; in other cases, there was no family knowledge until the ability was suddenly discovered.

In a somewhat related study by Guillett (3), a summary is made of a two and a half year old's ability to remember the names of forty-eight different kinds of birds by their pictures, adding on an average of two and a half birds per day on his own volition. However, no mention is given of this child's reading ability if any had developed.

#### *Conclusions and Implications:*

The significance of Cindy's "reading" ability is debatable. However, the fact that a two and a half year old child was able to discriminate between forty words in a relatively short time, that she looked at words from left to right, and that she was interested in knowing the names of letters, all indicate that her interest in the printed word might be more than transitory. Furthermore, since Cindy's attitude toward oral reading and storytime improved markedly during this same period, there seems to be no reason why she shouldn't open the door to the unlimited adventure locked in books a little early.

Of course, it is not the writer's purpose to encourage parents to start their children "reading" at such an early age. The interest must be inherent within the child. It should be remembered that any effort to cajole Cindy into more extensive reading were fruitless. The writer could only "fall in" with the child's rather vagrant and finicky wishes. That is the extent of encouragement given.

However, Cindy's behavior and the litera-

*(Continued on page 517)*

# We Can't Afford Not to Write

Four years ago I heard a reading specialist make the following statement:

"Writing is so much a part of reading I don't see how you can leave it out."<sup>1</sup>

These few words express my conviction that writing, with its multiple values for both able and slow learning children, should be a daily activity in every elementary school classroom.

By "writing," I mean free written expression, or creative writing, although the latter term connotes to many people only writing that has literary merit. In free written expression a child tells about his experiences or ideas and is encouraged to express his personal feelings about them. The writing may have literary merit, but it usually does not. The byproducts of this writing, however, are more important than the end results.

When children are invited to write freely and regularly, I have found that they not only spell, write, and read better, but they actually *behave* better as a result of releasing inner pressures.

This same release of emotions can be obtained by working with clay or paint, as Mauree Applegate says,<sup>2</sup> but today the increased demands for intense concentration on the academic skills permit less and less time for these outlets. Writing, on the other hand, is a basic *R*, yet *at the same time* it can be an outlet for children's pent-up feelings.

<sup>1</sup>Beulah K. Ephron, *Emotional Difficulties in Reading*. New York: Julian Press, Inc., 1953.

<sup>2</sup>Mauree Applegate, *Helping Children Write*. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1954, page 2.

Miss Pryor is Reading Consultant of the La Cañada School District in La Cañada, California.

Another concomitant of free written expression is the increased insight a teacher gains into children's personalities, their interests, and their problems. She cannot talk with each child daily, but she can "hear" him through his writing. And all these values of free written expression can be obtained without special materials or time-consuming preparation by the teacher.

## Corrective Reading

My conviction about writing, in which free written expression is used as a vehicle for the integration of spelling, reading, and writing skills, received its impetus twelve years ago when we initiated a corrective reading program in one elementary school. The children selected for the special help were third-grade pupils except for a few severely retarded readers in the fifth and sixth grades. The classes were small, four to six, and met for one hour a day, five times a week.

Various corrective techniques were used, and the one that proved most effective was the kinesthetic method which was first developed by Mrs. Helen B. Keller and the late Dr. Grace Fernald.<sup>3</sup> Each child writes his own story, which the teacher types for him to read the following day. When a child needs a word, the teacher writes it with black crayola in chalkboard-size script or print, if manuscript writing is used. The child traces the word with his finger and says each part of the word as he traces it. (Not *every* child must trace *every* word, as some critics of the method seem to believe.) When the child feels that he can write the word, he tries it on scrap paper,

<sup>3</sup>Grace Fernald, *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1943.



or on the chalkboard, before he writes it in his story. Then he files the word in his box with alphabetical dividers.

Two folders on my desk were labeled, "Please type my story," and "Your story is typed. Miss Pryor, *secretary*." The day after a child placed his handwritten story in the to-be-typed folder, he was sure that his "secretary" would not fail to have his type-written story waiting for him. And how children love to see themselves in print! They would eagerly read their stories to one another and to me and would sometimes illustrate them. Often a child took his typed stories to his classroom to read to his teacher who was regularly informed about her children's progress in the special reading classes. During recesses, I would often tell a child's teacher that he had just learned to write a particularly long word of his choice (such as "president," "United States," etc.). Later she would compliment him on his achievement and would sometimes ask him to write the word for his classmates—when she knew they didn't know the word. Occasionally, a child would teach the word to the class, and thus bolstered his self-confidence.

*Writing Technique Transfers to Classrooms.* Teachers often observed the corrective reading classes, and their visits encouraged the children at the same time that they oriented the teachers in the use of the corrective techniques. (When teachers left their classrooms, the principals usually substituted for them.)

Many teachers were convinced that other pupils in their classes could profit from the use of the kinesthetic method and they invited me to introduce it to them. I always began my demonstration by asking the children to name a word they would like to know how to write, adding that I could teach it to them quickly. From the words suggested, I would choose a long phonetic one, such as "encyclopedia," but

not "antidisestablishmentarianism"—at least not in a third grade!

The steps of the method I used were similar to those listed in the *Manual of the A to Z Spellers (Spelling through Writing)* which have adapted for classroom use the original Keller-Fernald kinesthetic method.

1. The teacher writes the word on the chalkboard while the children say it slowly.

2. The children say the word again as the teacher's hand slides over the word and uncovers one syllable at a time.

3. The teacher erases the word and the children try to write it on their practice papers, saying each syllable as they write it.

4. Children check to see if the word they have written is correct when the teacher writes it again on the chalkboard.<sup>4</sup>

"I got it! I got it!" These were the usual enthusiastic comments of the children when they checked their words.

Another lesson taught the classes how to study their weekly spelling words by writing them: the child uncovers one syllable of a word at a time with the index finger of the right hand while he looks at the word and says it. Then he tries to write the word from memory.<sup>5</sup>

The children soon found that this "sliding" technique was also helpful in unlocking unfamiliar words they met in reading.

Some of the primary teachers were eager to have their children try the story-writing technique used in the corrective reading classes, so they gathered dozens of cheese boxes (about 4" x 4" x 7") that served

<sup>4</sup>Helen Bass Keller, Mary Newing Forster, May V. Seagoe, *A to Z Spellers (Spelling through Writing) Manual*, San Francisco, Harr Wagner Publishing Company, 1950, page 29.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, page 28.

as individual word files. Older children alphabetized composition books to use as spelling dictionaries.

*What Do Children Write About?* When children write often, you may wonder what they all find to write about. Actually, when children write regularly, at least once or twice every week (and many of our children write every day), their desire to write increases and one story seems to ignite another. In the upper grades, however, there are few teachers anywhere (regardless of motivation), who have not heard the question: "What'll I write about?" It is usually asked by insecure children who need much adult direction. A teacher can usually start these children writing by spending a few minutes with them individually, after the rest of the class has set to work.

Primary pupils seem to have an abundance of ideas when they write often and their stories are respected. No greater respect can a teacher show than to type a child's story, and the two primary typewriters in each of our four schools are used daily. Although typing motivates writing and greatly benefits a child's early reading, it is not an essential part of the program and may be impractical for many teachers.

Stimulating classrooms with activities such as varied science projects and experiments, garden clubs, trips, music, and art are alive with seeds for stories. At the time of free written expression, however, a teacher should not assign topics. The reason is obvious: a child has a new pet, a gun, even a baby brother, or he is going on a trip with Dad. His least concern at that moment is the dairy, the Pilgrims, the Indians, or any other imposed subject. As Don Wolfe wrote, "The ideal theme topic for each elementary pupil is that pre-occupation with which he begins the day or sits down to write. Maybe he is angry

at a classmate. Maybe a dog has scared him on the way to school. Maybe his mother will not let him keep a little gray kitten he has found on his doorstep. When our children have the opportunity to write about such topics, it should not be an excuse but rather an incidental opportunity for the teaching of spelling, punctuation, and penmanship. The important thing is self-expression."<sup>6</sup>

"Graphotherapy" is the term I have given to the type of writing where children help to relieve their troubles through free written expression. Teachers should first explain that everybody has some kind of problem (she might even give a few of her own), but children should not be asked to write about themselves often and, again, it should never be required. Of course, all personal papers should be strictly confidential. Each year one third-grade teacher asks her class to write about their one greatest problem, and each year most of the problems are the same—siblings!

One second-grade teacher gets some quick and frank responses when she asks her children's help in planning classroom procedures and lessons or in settling arguments and fights that occur on every playground. After a few verbal responses come forth and hands are still waving, she says, "I want *everybody's ideas*. Will you please write them?" She calls this type of writing the I-Want-Your-Opinion-Method and she gets advice from all.

Last spring I substituted in a third grade classroom for a few days, and the first day not many of the children had "stories" they wanted to write. Before school the next morning, I quickly made thirty empty "books" by stapling writing paper and a colored cover together. They were in the chalkboard trays when the children came

<sup>6</sup>Don M. Wolfe, "Self-expression: The Heart of Language Arts," *Elementary English*, November, 1957, p. 450.

into the room. On one of the "books" was printed *My New Friends* and I told the children I was going to use it for *my* story about them. When I offered the books to the children, all wanted them, and they were soon busy filling them. The next day some of the children had *their own ideas* about format-making. They cut the writing paper and covers in the shapes of the subjects of their stories—be it a duck, a brother, an airplane, a snake, Saturn, an Octopus, an Easter rabbit, or the principal! We set up a "format table" that held colored construction paper, all types of writing paper, staplers, scissors, and glue. Around the table during, before, and even after school hours, were young authors eagerly creating their blank books and covers. One boy made his *Tall Tales* three or four feet long, and *The Tiny Princess* was too small for legible writing but it pleased her tiny author.

Books are perhaps the easiest way to motivate writing. Small volumes such as Anglund's *A Friend is Someone Who Likes You* or *Love Is a Special Way of Feeling* can easily be read to the class before writing time. *The Important Book* (by Margaret Wise Brown) is an old favorite, and often teachers compile the "important" stories in a class book for the reading table.

Teachers sometimes stop reading a book before the end and ask the children to write how they think the story turned out. Or, she may read the ending of a book and let the children imagine the beginning.

Countless are the ways to stimulate a child to write, and no teacher will be without plans if she reads *Easy in English*,<sup>7</sup> which has ("Cupboards of Ideas") or *Creative Ways to Teach English—Grades 7 to 12*.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Mauree Applegate, *Easy in English*, Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1960.

<sup>8</sup>Don M. Wolfe, *Creative Ways to Teach English—Grades 7 to 12*, New York: The Odyssey Press, Inc., 1958.

*Writing Climate.* The most careful plans to motivate writing will fail, however, if the writing climate is "cold." A child will reveal little about himself unless he trusts his teacher to guard his confidences. Nor will his writing have much creativity about it if he is afraid of a bad grade or has memories of papers returned with numerous red corrections and without a word of encouragement.

A favorable writing climate is no different from any classroom atmosphere where approval, acceptance, and sheer friendliness are felt between teacher and child and among the children themselves. "We know," says Hughes Mearns, "that vibrations of friendliness or unfriendliness go forth constantly from eyes, voice tone, body and spirit. Without a word being spoken these may close all communications or kindle hope and willingness in another."<sup>9</sup>

### SUMMARY

Writing techniques originally used with a few children in small corrective reading classes have developed into a functional writing program throughout the four elementary schools in the district.

As more and more teachers sought help with the writing program, the role of the reading specialist gradually changed from corrective reading teacher to consultant with such curriculum duties as giving assistance in the classroom in spelling, writing, and reading, and making individual diagnoses of those few children who need specially planned materials and programs of work.

Since the kinesthetic technique has been used in the primary grades, fewer children have needed special help in reading, and

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<sup>9</sup>Hughes Mearns, *Creative Power*, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1958, page 26. (Copyright by H. Mearns, 1929.)



### *The Golden Anniversary Year*

Founded in December, 1911, the National Council of Teachers of English last November held in Chicago its 50th annual convention, during this Golden Anniversary Year has been completing its first half-century, and in Philadelphia will actually observe its golden anniversary, its fiftieth birthday.

When in December, 1961, the National Council begins its second half-century, it will bear heavier responsibilities for the English profession than it has ever borne before, responsibilities clearly evident already in the expanded activity of this Golden Anniversary year.

Although most of these responsibilities lie in areas already served by the Council, one area — that of relationship with the federal government—is new. It will provide not always predictable opportunities and sometimes controversial obligations. But these will be opportunities not to be rejected and obligations not to be shunned if the Council is to continue to represent the English teachers of America. Some outline of this future relationship from the government's point of view may be expected in the convention banquet address to be delivered by Dr. Sterling McMurrin, the U. S. Commissioner of Education.

By already undertaking two obligations in this area the Council has made 1961 unique in its history. With deliberate con-

cern for the welfare of English teaching everywhere and with the conviction that local or even state action could not produce all needed improvement, the Executive Committee in 1960 had authorized a major independent study of the profession for the purpose of providing the Congress with data for its consideration during discussion of impending legislation, particularly extension of the National Defense Education Act.

This study, published in book form in January as *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* and presented individually to each member of the Congress, has certainly given the Council more public recognition than had any previous action in its history. From the nation's press and leading educators came not only expressions approving an organization's performing such a searching and objective self-criticisms but also welcome statements in support of the Council's suggested program of improvement. Several affiliates at once moved toward what action is possible on the state level; many state administrators and college and university department heads have begun planning in terms of this program. In the meantime your Executive Secretary maintained close contact with the legislative scene in Washington and with the U. S. Office of Education, and your President twice testified there, in May before a Senate subcommittee and in June

before a House special committee, as to the Council support of the inclusion of English in Titles III, IV, and VI of the National Defense Education Act. Although injection of issues irrelevant to English has blocked NDEA passage as of this writing, hope remains that suitable legislation will be enacted before this Council letter appears. If such a measure fails to include English, the Council is prepared to carry its case to the 1962 session of the Congress. Our commitment must be to raise the standard of English in all the states.

The second major obligation assumed with respect to the federal government has been preparing for the United States Information Agency the series of textbooks in English as a foreign language. The excellent and tireless leadership of coordinator William R. Slager has steadily pushed this project to the point where Book One has gone to the publisher, Book Two is in shape for criticism by the advisory board, and progress on the remaining four books is well along. We have agreed also to a supplementary contract to produce a modified edition for use in certain African areas.

But in the more familiar fields of operation the Council has also been unusually active, with increasingly intense and productive concern. In his first full year in office our Executive Secretary, James R. Squire, has manifested a dedicated zeal and an inclusive engagement with the business of the entire profession. Through close association with him this past year your President is deeply convinced of the sound judgment of those who chose Dr. Squire for a job that requires a practical idealism and that tries a man's patience, competence, endurance, and integrity. But it has been a job to which loyal help has been given by our excellent professional headquarters staff which, in its first full year in the new executive offices, has included Enid M. Olson as publications associate,

Mary T. Gerhart as business secretary, John Murphy and then Roger Martin as business manager, and Robert Whitman as director of the achievement awards program.

Both Dr. Squire and other officers have personally maintained contact with affiliates and kindred organizations, by speaking and by participating in workshops and discussion groups. One significant participation, by invitation, was in the discussion held by a committee of college presidents representing the American Council on Education; another was in a special conference called by U. S. Commissioner McMurrin to consider means by which the U. S. Office can best support research in English teaching. Your President has spoken before local and regional English groups in Edmonton, Alberta (at the inaugural convention of the Alberta Association of Teachers of English), Minnesota, Maryland, Arkansas, Oregon, Montana, and Idaho; other officers likewise have met with various affiliates. Your President and Past President Ruth Strickland spoke at the meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; First Vice President Robert G. Carlsen, with William Hoth, represented the Council at the meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals; your President spoke at the National Conference on Curriculum and at the National Conference on General Education and participated in the Conference on Higher Education and in the I. C. A. Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language; Dr. Squire and Dr. Carlsen participated in the convention of the International Reading Association; and Council members were official representatives at the meetings of the American Academy of Political and Social Science and the American Textbook Publishers Institute as well as at several cere-



monies inaugurating college and university presidents.

A continuing activity of the Executive Committee and the headquarters office has been the now established Achievement Awards program. Requiring the attention of a half-time staff member, this program already has surpassed in extent and in results the hope that it would provide statewide recognition for English excellence in the secondary school.

Among Council publications *College English* has experienced its first full year under the widely approved editorship of James E. Miller, Jr.; the *English Journal* continued its dynamic role with Dwight L. Burton as editor; and *Elementary English* passed from the devoted and experienced hands of John J. DeBoer to be the charge of its highly qualified new editor, William A. Jenkins, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, who in October began a three-year term. CCC, with its editor, Cecil B. Williams, capitalized on increased CCCC membership to reach more widely into the freshman field. *Abstracts of English Studies* extended its coverage of current scholarly publications, and *Studies in the Mass Media* completed its first full year after experiencing enthusiastic acceptance of its selected variety of materials dealing with mass communication.

Another first for the Golden Anniversary year is the portentous formation of the Commission on the English Language authorized in 1960 by the Executive Committee. With W. Nelson Francis as its director, an initial session of a steering committee occurred at the CCCC meeting in Washington. The entire committee will meet in Philadelphia. With such leadership and carefully chosen able members this Commission is to give direction and substance to the application of new linguistic knowledge in the teaching of English.

The Council's senior Commission, that on the curriculum, is nearing the end of its historic enterprise that began with the first volume of the curriculum series. Despite the setback due to the death of its editor, James Work, the college volume is now due for completion during the winter under the new editor, past president John Gerber, and the new assistant editor, John Fisher of Indiana University. Editor Alfred Grommon of Stanford University greatly hastened progress on the volume on teacher preparation when he spent one uninterrupted month last summer at Council headquarters. The volume should go to press before spring.

The third Commission, that on the profession, has devised plans for a series of summer upgrading institutes for instructors in English methods and is seeking foundation support.

Two other small groups have contributed in their respective ways to Council work. The new advisory council prepared for the Executive Committee a detailed memorandum about areas demanding specific Council forethought and action. Last spring your President opened the first meeting of the trustees of the new NCTE Research Foundation — Helene C. Hartley, Robert C. Pooley, Louise M. Rosenblatt, Porter B. Perrin, and Karl W. Dykema. They proceeded to elect Professor Pooley as permanent chairman and Theodore Hornberger of Pennsylvania and Oscar Haugh of Kansas as additional members. The board has now announced its plan of operation and is ready to receive applications for grants-in-aid as well as gifts by which the initial base of fifty thousand dollars may be increased to provide for future needs.

Council committee activity has mounted to a new height this past year. The too frequently little recognized but assiduous labor of over sixty committee chairmen and their committee members actually pro-

vides the muscle of the Council's life. All of them deserve description here; space permits mention of only an arbitrarily chosen few.

Under the editorship of Neil Postman the Committee on the Study of Television completed its book-long study, *Television and the Teaching of English*, and obtained the support of the Television Information Office in distributing copies to all the Council membership.

The Committee on Recordings released a long-play disk of Lucyle Hook's readings of poems by Emily Dickinson, an achievement complemented by an issue of *Studies in the Mass Media* intended as a guide to such readings.

The Committee on Research issued Bulletin No. 1, an inventory of current problems and of resources available for meeting them. Committee member Ralph Staiger made a listing of current research studies, in cooperation with the National Conference on Research in English, for publication in *Elementary English*, and committee member Ingrid Strom prepared a list of research in secondary English for publication in the *English Journal*.

The Committee on the State of Knowledge about Composition, working on an emergency assignment from the Executive Committee, first met in Washington in April, pursued individual investigations in spring and summer with a special inventory meeting of chairman Richard Brad-dock, associate chairman Joseph L. Miller, and Dora V. Smith, in July, and after a round-up meeting in the fall hoped to issue its fact-finding report during the winter. This should be valuable in determining specific problems for investigation before definitive curriculum projects in composition are prepared.

The Committee on the College and Adult Reading List in Literature and the Fine Arts completed its two-year task in

July under Edward Lueder's direction, and the manuscript has gone to the printer. Publication is due in midwinter.

The Committee on Affiliates dealt long and carefully with the difficult problem of adequate standards and representation. After review by the Executive Committee its proposal has been revised and will be offered to the Board of Directors in Philadelphia.

Through the year plans developed for the 51st convention in Philadelphia under the direction of Howard Carlisle, local chairman, and Donald R. Tuttle, Second Vice President and program chairman. Resolved by the success of the first pre-convention study groups last year, the Executive Committee authorized another series this year in what were adjudged critical areas; language and linguistics, articulation, in-service education, and the teaching of composition. For months your President felt it would be possible to introduce President John F. Kennedy as the banquet speaker. The likelihood of increased international tension at the time of the convention has prevented his acceptance, but he has promised to send us a personal message. The principal speakers for the three general sessions are in themselves sufficient reason for convention attendance: novelist Sir Charles P. Snow, poet and dramatist Archibald MacLeish, critic and producer Harold Clurman, and Sterling M. McMurrin, U. S. Commissioner of Education.

Two summer activities of the Council retained popularity. Again the European tours, this year under the direction of Gerhart Friedrich and of Carolyn Bagby and Ruth Orr, enabled a number of teachers to study and pursue common interests together in England and on the continent. Again co-sponsored workshops, fifteen all told, including seven dealing with linguistic applications, provided teachers

from Georgia to Oregon with opportunity for concentrated study in recent trends.

Under chairman Erwin Steinberg the Council's constituent group, CCCC, has enjoyed a year of increased growth and of significant contribution to the college freshman field through its quarterly bulletin, CCC, its Spring Conference in Washington with 750 in attendance, and the activity of its own particular committees.

Over and above all these operations of the Council your President has been deeply impressed by the amazing activity of the many affiliates. Year after year their publications have improved in number and quality. Their state and regional projects, while often reflecting general con-

cerns of the profession, frequently treat problems of special local concern. In the activity of these affiliates, so rich and varied that its bare outline would require another Councilletter, many teachers gain the experience from which they move into positions of national responsibility. The affiliates, indeed, are our strong "grass roots."

Succinctly, it has been a good year for the Council. We can confidently expect that the work of 1961 is in itself an augury of further progress in the profession as in December we begin our second half-century.

Harold B. Allen  
President, NCTE

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ture reviewed do suggest that more research is needed on pre-school learning ability. The importance of the first five years of a child's life in learning has perhaps been underestimated. It follows, as Koffka (4) and Evans (1) suggest, that many important concepts, ideas, or ways of doing things can be more or less automatically instilled in a child's mind much before such things can be explained logically. Attitudes developed during these formative years can be the guideposts of all future behavior. The preschool child is a great imitator; consequently, his actions may be a carbon copy of his parents', good or bad. Since one cannot be certain which part a child is "buying," it follows that a good example be set at all times. One might add that when a "sale" is made the judicious use of praise will bring reorders.

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# Idea Inventory

In the Golden Anniversary program of the 1960 NCTE Chicago convention Harold C. Martin wrote a paragraph for the page called "A Book that Has Influenced My Thinking about the Teaching of English." He named as his book *How the French Boy Learns to Write* by Rollo Walter Brown (Harvard Press, 1915). The author, who was Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at Wabash College, had always been impressed by the proficiency of French teachers in teaching their mother tongue, and as a teacher of his own mother tongue he wished to observe their techniques. In 1912 he was given a sabbatical to visit French classrooms in both the primary and secondary school systems, holding conferences with classroom teachers and other persons. His observations were made in schools for boys. Although his visit was made prior to World War I, his comments sound very much like those in the recent book *The Schools* by Martin Mayer (Harpers, 1961; \$4.95).

Because *How the French Boy Learns to Write* is out of print, I ordered a second-hand copy through the Iowa Book and Supply Co., Iowa City, Iowa. It took them three months to find a copy which sold for \$2.50, so I would like to share much of it with readers. First I will quote Mr. Martin's paragraph:

Imitation and experience have given me whatever craft I have as a teacher, but a single book taught me how to understand teaching

as an art. It is Rollo Walter Brown's *How the French Boy Learns to Write*, a model of concise reporting and perceptive commentary written in lucid prose and suffused with a bright vision of what excellence means and demands. Specifically, the book shows that the teacher's first and irreplaceable resource is knowledge; that care in preparation is at least as important as skill in execution; that there is no greater injustice to the learner than to sacrifice his, and others', learning to considerations of pity and hurt feelings; that good teaching of composition precludes shortcuts, evasions, and delegations of labor; that rigor is enemy neither to liveliness nor to independence.

This is a succinct summary, but it does not mention the joy and pride that the French boys have in learning to speak and write correct French. The French boy has shown for many years that "he writes with greater grammatical correctness, sharper accuracy of thought, surer and more intelligent freedom, and greater regard for good form and finish than does the American boy of the same age." The French people as a whole have placed emphasis upon the importance of good speaking and writing.

"That which is not clear is not French," was said in the 18th century. Professor Brown said it is not a combination of superior intelligence plus some sort of magic ease in his native language that enables French boys to express themselves with ease and accuracy. He said it was the result of systematic study and training

which develops a conscience. "It seems, then, more reasonable to suppose that the training which enables barbers, cobblers, messenger boys, bus conductors, grocers, and waitresses to explain questions of grammatical and rhetorical usage has also helped to provide them with a conscience which in large measure holds them to accurate speech and writing."

In his year in France Professor Brown found that the American boys living in France who attended French schools had caught the French classroom spirit of work, and with increased work came greater skill in both French and English. We must admit that our nation of fifty states cannot be as uniform as the French nation, which has a closely organized educational system. The program of study has been worked out in detail and is closely followed by the teachers. There is no break in methods or ideals during the child's school career, and the unity of the course in writing and speaking is revealed in the close continuity of the work from year to year. The teachers know well what the children have accomplished in their previous classes. Writing holds a large place in school life.

First, it matters not in what classroom a small boy may be seen, he is never without his general notebook, in which he records all assignments, all problems, all experiments, all quotations to be learned, all geographical and historical notes and maps, as well as many special exercises; and the language he employs in this work is carefully marked and graded by the teacher. In the second place, compositions are numerous. From the time the boy is regarded as mature enough to think consecutively, he prepared compositions at regular intervals. In some classes he writes two short exercises a week; in others one more formal piece each week; and still in others, a longer piece every two weeks with shorter exercises every three or five days. In the elementary primary schools, even up to the time the boy is thirteen or fourteen years old, the shorter themes once or twice a week seem to stand in great favor. These vary in length, usually,

from 150 to 400 words—they are rather longer than the average American daily theme—and the less frequent longer compositions range ordinarily from 600 to 1,500 words. Then, in the upper grades, there are in addition many papers in history, civics, philosophy, and literature. So it may be seen that a boy is provided with much opportunity to write. It is, in fact, scarcely an exaggeration to say that he writes all the time. His practice is so continuous that he sooner or later comes to do the work in a perfectly normal frame of mind, just as he performs his other schoolday labors.

It is not the volume of work, but the quality which is admired.

If a boy thinks and writes poorly, he is looked upon as an unfortunate who deserves either pity or contempt. If, on the other hand, he is able to think and write skillfully, he is held in great honor by his teachers and his classmates.

Authors of books and articles discuss the mother tongue as seriously as matters of grave national policy, and parents are anxious to preserve the written work of their children. Pupils who do extremely well receive prizes and public acclaim. The teacher of French accepts his task as difficult and time-consuming, but extremely important. Studies in vocabulary and practice in dictation are carried on constantly in the lower grades. Vocabulary building is systematic.

The word is looked at from many different points of view . . . The pupil's mind has no opportunity to wander or become inactive. . . . He defines it, he finds examples of its accepted uses, he learns its original significance — its literal meaning when the word is predominantly figurative—he compares it with other words of similar meaning, and above all he contrasts it with words that are essentially the opposite. It is scarcely too much to say that the basis of all word-teaching is contrast rather than likeness. . . . Rapid-fire questions are common in a class, and pupils are often asked to repeat a story in their own language.

The French believe that through dictation a child can acquire skill before he develops the power of profound or sus-



tained thought. He has practice in writing the thoughts of others while he is yet too young to write his own. The values of dictation are these:

It gives the pupil much practice in the handling of the sentence; it directs his attention to grammatical constructions; it helps him to learn to spell, to punctuate, and to capitalize; it enlarges his vocabulary and gives him practice in the use of words already known to him; and it fills his mind with good standards of speech . . . . While he is listening carefully to his teacher's reading, catching the words in their natural thought groups, and putting them down one by one in his exercise-book, he is learning much about the mechanics of composition.

The teachers find complete, interesting paragraphs to dictate, and before reading, they explain the paragraph fully. Then corrections are made immediately, and the whole exercise takes only ten or fifteen minutes. Nine-year-olds are quick to listen. After a short, crisp paragraph one boy spells the difficult words and the class corrects the papers. Certain words are underlined to form the basis of a lesson in grammar the following day. All is preserved in the inevitable notebook. No spelling is

separated from reading and writing, and children develop a spelling conscience.

Punctuation, word order, sentence relations, the meaning of words, the movement and balance of good writing, and the close relation of the spoken and written language are also grounded deeply in the pupil's mind. When, therefore, he is practicing dictation, he is becoming so intimately acquainted with a number of essential matters that his knowledge of them passes over from mere knowledge to feeling, and thus becomes available as "second nature" when he is ready to write compositions of his own.

The aforementioned notebooks are soon filled. Some of the boys filled two notebooks a month for eight months. One set which Professor Brown brought back with him consisted of 16 well filled notebooks of 30 good-sized pages, or nearly 500 pages in all, written by a boy of thirteen in the course of one school year. The pupil writes knowing that his work will be examined critically, as the teacher calls for the notebook and marks it as though it were a theme. The regular compositions, however, are written on theme paper in a special set of composition books.

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annual achievement tests show a marked improvement in all language skills over a period of ten years.

Perhaps of even greater importance than the growth in academic skills is the enthusiasm of the young writers, their teachers, principals, and parents.



### WASTE NO WORDS

Terse and to the point were the opinions of youthful readers who helped select six books for top honors this year in the 16th annual Boys' Clubs of America Junior Book Awards reading program. Announcement of the six medal winners chosen by an adult committee from twelve books recommended by boys across the country revealed fact and fiction about equally divided among the award-winning books.

Iris Vinton, a fellow member of the Women's National Book Association and former editor of this column, sent along examples of the boys' opinions in which they often "wasted no words."

She said: "One youngster summed up *This Is New York* (by M. Sasek published by Macmillan) as 'a sight-seeing tour in book form.'"

"Of the dogs in *But Charlie Wasn't Listening* (certificate winning book by Tatiana Balkoff Drowne, illustrated by Helen Meredith and published by Pantheon), a boy remarked that 'they sure didn't lead a dog's life.'"

"A ten-year-old said of *Devil's Hill* (award winner by Nan Chauncy, published by Franklin Watts), that he had to go look for cows on 'grandpa's farm once and I got lost and the cows came home without me, so I liked the story very much.'"

"Another began his comments on *Grishka*

and the Bear (medal winner by Rene Guillot, published by Criterion) with 'this is a story about a beautiful friendship between a boy and a bear' and took off from there.

"About map *Map Making: The Art That Became a Science* (by Lloyd A. Brown, published by Little, Brown) there were many who said that they had never before realized how complicated it was and how much a map maker had to know in order to locate accurately all the parts of the world. The consensus was that 'it is a good book to own so that you can study it.'"

"Every reader found something particularly fascinating to him in *Challenge of the Sea* (by Arthur C. Clarke, published by Rinehart and Winston). Diving bells were of most interest to some, sea monsters to others, the cycle of the sea—'plankton is eaten by plankton animal which is eaten by herring, which is eaten by tuna, which is eaten by man'—to still others. Most boys mentioned mining and one ten-year-old started right off with: 'You may not believe me but men mine the oceans.'"

Miss Vinton's relayed message continued with the comment: "The Vagabond in *Rasmus and the Vagabond* (by Astrid Lindgren, published by Viking) was without exception considered 'a good man' and the fact that Rasmus 'found a good home' was the perfect ending. There was much

praise for the writing because the author 'went into detail very well and that made the story much more interesting.'"

Other runners-up in addition to the one about dogs were: *About Caves* by Terry Shannon (Melmont); *All About Great Medical Discoveries* by David Dietz (Random); *Congo Explorer: Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza* by Jeanne Carbonnier (Scribner's); *Hawaii, The Aloha State* by Ben Adams (Hill and Wang); *Quarterback's Aim* by Beman Lord (Walck).

Members of the Junior Book Awards Committee were Ellen Lewis Buell, *The New York Times Book Review*; Lillian Gurney, The American News Company; Frank G. Jennings, Director, Library Club of America, and editor at large, *The Saturday Review*; and Ann Sannermann, Librarian, Lawndale-Chicago Boys Clubs.

The authors of the award-winning books were pleased, I trust, to have their brain-children selected by the adult committee. But I am certain they were doubly grateful to have been honored by the young readers.

Speaking from experience, this writer knows what a "lift" a compliment from a juvenile, at whom the story is aimed, can give one.

A book written several years ago for boys 8 to 12 received several favorable reviews, including a squib in the *Chicago Tribune* juvenile book section.

However, a woman who was in a position to select books for her reading group in Chicago, had written a brief comment: "Highly contrived; not recommended." My poor brain-child had been slapped in the face!

Sometime later, in fact after the book had been in print several years, a letter came from a boy who lived in a small town in the east. He said his class was arranging a book week display, and his teacher had given the pupils a choice in books to be exhibited as favorites.

"I told her *Jack of Trades* was my favorite book and she said I should write to you. Please send me a picture of you and other things for my display."

The thrill of having a boy, with thousands of books to choose from, and in defiance of the natural inclination to pick classics which adults think should be his favorites, stand on his own two feet and pick MY book is certainly hard to describe.

I thought with smugness and pure malice of the adult judge's comment. Not recommended, indeed!

A fellow-author in the juvenile book field, Val Gendron of Chicago, who formerly lived on the east coast, said she receives the greatest satisfaction from comments by boy-readers. She had tried her hand, with success, at many kinds of writing, including adult fiction coping with psychotic problems, frustration and bitterness.

She aims her juvenile books directly at boys. She said the plot concerning the youth who struggles against great odds and achieves success through his own strength of character "may sound corny" but is wholesome and American and leaves her with "a good taste in the mouth."

The responses by young persons, some of them poorly expressed but all sincere, are precious to her.

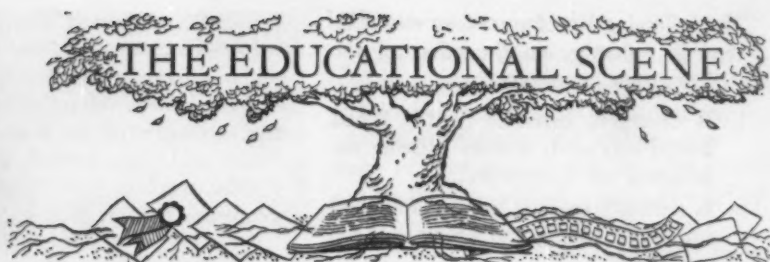
Which brings to mind a letter from my nephew, Davie Coon, who lives in Kankakee, Ill., which he began:

"Dear Aunt Alice: I am writing this letter not just to be friendly but because my teacher let me report on your book. . . ."

This was as pleasing as a note from a child about a book of very short stories (now out of print) in which he said "Some made me sad and some made me glad and I liked them all. Here are some letters for you." Enclosed were several gilt paste-up letters, which must have broken his set. He made the author feel glad and sad, too.



Dr. Wolfson



### Creativity in the Classroom

The need to develop and encourage creativity in children has long been stressed by writers concerned with art, music, rhythms, and similar activities in the elementary schools. "Creative Writing" has also been discussed with emphasis on encouraging personal "creativity" in all children.

Observation reveals that often these activities are, in fact, patterned and stereotyped. All the children during rhythms move like the same elephant. The pictures hanging on the halls are amazingly similar. The stories reflect a single basic structure. The question continually needs to be asked: Are we primarily concerned with judging the product or with exploring the process?

The recent body of research on creativity in science and in relation to personality development raises a considerable number of questions for teachers about the total school program. Scholars in many fields have been examining this concept.<sup>1</sup> Creativity has been analyzed in terms of product, process and personality development.

Among the characteristics of the creative personality are: fluency, flexibility, originality (in the general category of divergent thinking), sensitivity to problems and re-

definition.<sup>2</sup> Additional characteristics frequently mentioned are: sense of humor, ability to tolerate ambiguity, independence, and curiosity.

In this brief discussion it is not possible to explore the complexity of the concept as it is being developed in research,<sup>3</sup> nor to examine the role of our culture in the development of creativity. However, we can each examine what kind of behavior we are encouraging in children in our classrooms.

Torrance pointed out: "In a recent study, I found that about 60 per cent of the language arts objectives for the activities of a particular day were concerned with conformity to behavioral norms. Less than nine per cent were related to creative thinking."<sup>4</sup>

It must be made clear that no one is suggesting that teaching for conforming and convergent behavior be entirely replaced by teaching for original and divergent behavior. Torrance's research, as well as Getzels and Jackson's,<sup>5</sup> suggests that we have a serious imbalance in our procedures and attitudes.

Dr. Wolfson is Associate Professor of Elementary Education at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee.

<sup>1</sup>See Anderson, H. H., Ed., *Creativity and Its Cultivation*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

<sup>2</sup>J. P. Guilford, "Traits of Creativity" in Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>See Taylor, Calvin, Ed., *Research Conference on The Identification of Creative Scientific Talent*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959.

<sup>4</sup>Torrance, E. Paul, "Conditions for Creative Growth," 26 pp., mimeo.

<sup>5</sup>Taylor, Calvin, Ed. *op. cit.*, pp. 46-57.

The following list of questions might be a start in reflecting on the effect of the school program on youngsters:

1. Is divergent behavior (within broad limits) accepted, or does it bring expressions of disapproval?
2. Is curiosity encouraged and followed up, or is it usually the wrong time for questions?
3. Are children's suggestions for changes in procedures considered and acted, or are procedures determined and routinized by the teacher?
4. Are children encouraged to search for alternative answers, solutions, procedures, or does the teacher have the "best" one in mind when the question is asked?
5. Are children encouraged to make decisions for themselves and to evaluate the results as *they* see them, or does the teacher make most decisions and determine what is "good"?

Dean Walter Cook and E. Paul Torrance<sup>6</sup> have summed up some of the educational implications as follows:

"Teachers can do much to provide experiences which stimulate the development of the creative thinking abilities. They can make children more sensitive to environmental stimuli, encourage them to play around with objects and ideas, and develop in them a willingness to trust their own perceptions of reality. To support this, they should begin early to test systematically each new idea and develop a tolerance for new or unusual ideas. . . . "If external evaluation is too threatening or if the prevailing atmosphere is one of negative criticism, creativity will not flourish. There must be periods of non-

evaluation to permit playing around or experimentation with ideas and materials without fear of evaluation. The child himself needs to develop habits of constructive criticism of his own ideas. Both active and quiet periods are necessary. Finally, teachers must themselves be adventurous and creative."

### Additional References

- Darrow, H. F. and R. Van Allen., *Independent Activities for Creative Learning*, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1961. (Practical Suggestions for Teaching Number 21)
- Torrance, E. Paul. *Guiding Creative Talent*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, in press.
- Miel, Alice, Ed. *Creativity in Teaching: Invitation and Instances*, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, In press.
- Witty, Paul, James B. Conant and Ruth Strang. *Creativity of Gifted and Talented Children*. (addresses given at the 1959 meeting of the American Association of School Administrators) New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

### A New Magazine

*Books for Young Readers*, now in its second year of publication, is an interesting and useful publication for teachers, librarians and parents. It is published four times a year primarily for the purpose of reviewing current books published for young people. Two or more feature articles will be included along with many illustrations.

A free sample copy may be obtained by enclosing ten cents to cover handling and postage. The yearly subscription rate is \$2.50. Write to: Books for Young Readers Magazine, 18288 Prevost Ave., Detroit 35, Michigan.

### National Children's Book Week

This year's celebration of Book Week, November 12th-18th, will mark the forty-third year that this special effort has been

<sup>6</sup>W. Cook and E. Paul Torrance, "The Educated Man is Creative," *Minnesota Journal of Education*, October 1960.





made to call attention to the wealth of books available to children and the personal rewards of reading.

Each year an official Book Week poster and other decorative materials are designed by well-known children's book illustrators. This year's poster which also appears on bookmarks and seals is by Peter Burchard. The three yellow and black streamers are by Ezra Jack Keats, Ruth Carroll, and Arthur Marokvia and the new quiz "Parties in Favorite Books" is by Jessica Zemsky.

There are three special kits of materials: The Basic Book Week Kit (1.00), The Book Party Quiz Kit (\$2.50), and The Book Fair Kit (\$1.25). There are a number of other individual items. (When ordering kits send check or cash with order. Only orders over \$5.00 may be billed.) The folder, "Aids to Celebrating Book Week," which describes all of these is available upon request from The Children's Book Council, Inc., 175 Fifth Ave., New York 10.

### **Audiovisual Sources**

*Guides to Newer Educational Media* identifies and describes existing and readily obtainable catalogs, indexes, periodicals, specialized listings, and services and journals of professional organizations which systematically provide information on the newer educational media.

Materials listed date from 1950 to the present. A number of the items relate specifically to the Language Arts, e.g. "Audio-Visual Materials for Teaching Reading," "Seeing is Believing: A Guide to Folklore Filmstrips" and "Teaching Aids in the English Language Arts: An Annotated and Critical List." The last named booklet is the work of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English. Most of the information included will be more useful to librarians and materials specialists than to the classroom teacher.

*Guides to Newer Educational Media: Films, Filmstrips, Phonorecords, Radio, Slides, Television*, Margaret I. Rufsvold and Carolyn Guss. American Library Association in cooperation with the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. June 23, 1961. 84 pages. Paper. \$1.50.

### **Phonograph Record for Classroom and Library**

In cooperation with the major phonograph record companies, Educational Record Sales has compiled a list of available recordings of high technical quality especially selected for ready integration in the kindergarten to 12th grade school programs.

This 60-page catalog, *Phonograph Records for Classroom and Library*, is available without charge to educators requesting a copy. All requests should be directed to: Educational Record Sales, 157 Chambers Street, New York 7, N. Y.

(Continued on page 530)



Mabel F. Altstetter



### FICTION

**THE MOUNTAIN DOOR.** *Written and illustrated by Rosalie Fry. Dutton, 1961. \$2.95. (7-11)*

The wonderful world of make-believe is invitingly portrayed through Finella the changeling and Finella her counterpart, the human child who had been stolen at birth by the Little People. The chance meeting of the two and their subsequent activities in trying to find a way of life that each desired make a good story. Miss Fry's love of nature as seen in her descriptions of the Irish countryside and the animals who follow the girls about gives much pleasure to the reader. There is pleasure too, in the changeling's discovery that the real world is more satisfying than the world of fantasy.

A

**ANDY FINDS A WAY.** *By Jesse Stuart. Illustrated by Robert Henneberger. Whittlesey, 1961. \$2.25. (7-11)*

The well-known novelist has added another to his four books for children. The Kentucky hills and their people again provide the setting and characters for this simple story of a young boy's love for a calf that was destined for the butcher and the novel way in which the animal was saved. There are good family relationships shown without sentimentality and the reader understands something of the strug-

gle to make ends meet that is the lot of many of the hill people.

A

**WINDSHIP BOY.** *By Brian O'Brien. Dutton, 1961. \$3.50. (12+)*

A realistic perfectionist might protest that too many adventures on both land and sea befall Johnno Brown in his two years apprenticeship aboard the clipper *Formosa* for there is not a single dull page in the whole book. It is a rousing story of sea and sailors, thieves, pirates, sharks, traders, slaves, storms, and all the other colorful and dangerous happenings in many parts of the world that could come to a tramp cargo vessel before the days of steam. There are hardships and courage too, for only the very stouthearted could endure the rough life. Today's children need to know their proud heritage of valiant spirits who could endure what had to be endured in line of duty.

A valuable part of the book is the ap-



Muriel Crosby

pendix which deals with sailor's knots. Descriptions and illustrations make processes clear. Heading each chapter is a silhouette showing a full rigged sailing vessel and the name of each. There is a hearty sea chanty at the beginning of each chapter.

The author is a world traveler, an African trader, and an adventurer who writes with authority of the strange power of the sea that has drawn men through the ages.

A

PASQUALA OF SANTA YNEZ MISSION. *By Florence Wightman Rowland. Illustrated by Charles Geer. Walck, 1961. \$3.00. (8-10)*

The publisher says that this story is based on fact. It is a romanticized story of a young Indian girl who saved a California mission in 1824. The life of the mission Indian is contrasted sharply with the savage tribes who resented the peaceful ways of the Christians. There is much action in the book because fear of the savages permeated all the activities of the mission. The kidnapping of Pasquala and her mother is the highlight of the story. Four years later Pasquala escaped and with great hardship returned to warn Padre Uria of the plot to destroy the mission and the people. In spite of the romantic treatment of the story there is much to be learned about the early mission days of California.

A

FROSTY. *Story and Pictures by Clare Turley Newberry. Harper, 1961. \$2.50. (6-10)*

Readers who know Mrs. Newberry's exquisite pictures of cats will welcome this book with its vigorous illustrations of a great Alaskan Malamute dog. Those who will become acquainted with her for the first time will want to read other books by her.

The story is simple. Eight year old Felice had wanted a small puppy for years but her parents finally decided to get a full-grown dog almost as large as their daughter. Felice was bitterly disappointed but Frosty finally wins her heart and makes a place for himself in the neighborhood and the transition makes a satisfying story. The print and paper are excellent.

A

OTTO IN AFRICA. *Written and illustrated by William Pene Du Bois. Viking, 1961. \$2.50. (5-8)*

Otto, the enormous otterhound is back again to delight young readers. This time he is in Africa where he has been taken to live in the wide-open spaces when he outgrew his native French village. Again Otto proves his worth by defeating single-handed About the Fierce and his one hundred seventy bad bandits who threaten the French fort. He runs around them creating such a tornado that they are all tossed into the air and when they come down again they steal away. Otto was given a medal for Extraordinary Courage in the Face of Extreme Danger. Children will enjoy the delightful nonsense and hilarious pictures.

A

## FOLKLORE

ROUMANIAN FOLK TALES. *Compiled and translated by Jean Ure. Illustrated by Charles Mozley. Watts, 1961. \$2.95. (All ages)*

Thirty-five stories—"some funny, some touching or wry, and all entertaining"—make up this excellent collection. The compiler points out that as each teller of a tale recounts what he has heard he puts a little of himself and his times into it and as a result each story has something to tell us of real times in the past. He also points out the kinship of these tales with stories from other lands. The book is an excellent

source of material for storytelling or reading aloud as well as an enticing array for the individual reader. A

**THE MILKY WAY AND OTHER CHINESE FOLK TALES.** *Retold by Adet Lin. Illustrated by Enrico Arno. Harcourt, Brace, 1961. \$2.75. (8-12)*

A daughter of the noted author, Lin Yutang, has selected twelve Chinese stories, favorites of her own childhood. Ancient Chinese philosophy permeates all the stories and goodness and simplicity triumph over evil as wicked sorcerers, beautiful but vain princesses, boasters and brave young men make their way through the pages of the book.

There is much charm in the telling of these ancient tales but the same directness found in folklore the world over is here. This is a valuable addition to a rapidly growing body of world folklore now available to American children. A

**MORE ONCE-UPON-A-TIME STORIES.** *Retold by Rose Dobbs. Illustrated by Flavia Gåg. Random, 1961. \$2.95. (5-10)*

Miss Dobbs calls her collection "a score of happy tales to read and tell." It is a worthy companion to her *Once Upon a Time Story Book*. Ten of the stories are about wise and foolish people and ten are about wise and foolish animals. Many of the stories are from the Talmud and other Hebraic treasures. Other cultures are also represented in this excellent collection.

The introduction will be of special interest to adults for Miss Dobbs traces her exploration for the source of each story. There emerges clearly the world-wide kinship of all folklore. A

### EASY READING

**I'M TIRED OF LIONS.** *Stories and Pictures by Zhenya Gay. Viking, 1961. \$2.50. (3-6)*

Little Leo moped about for days be-

cause he was sick and tired of lions. His wise and patient mother lived through his blundering attempts to be a giraffe, a bird, a toad, a hippopotamus, and a snake. He finally solved his problem in a satisfactory manner with the help of his father and mother. Many children will see themselves in this wise story. The illustrations are Zhenya Gay at her best. A

**TELL ME SOME MORE.** *By Crosby Newell Bonsall. Pictures by Fritz Siebel. (An I CAN READ Book.) Harper, 1961. \$1.95. (4-8)*

Beginning readers will be able to read and enjoy this book with a minimum of adult help. The theme of the story is the joy of discovering the treasures of a library where you can pick up a camel, pat a lion on the nose, lift up a river, and be wider than a whale. Andrew tells Tim in simple words of the fun of exploring a place where these and other wonderful things can happen—in books. A

**CHESTER.** *Story and Pictures by Syd Hoff. (An I CAN READ Book). Harper, 1961. \$1.95. (4-8)*

Chester was a wild horse who longed to be wanted, to be loved and cared for. He had to go through a series of adventures with animals, men and children before he finally found his longed-for place. The slight story is told with simple vocabulary and enough action to make it thoroughly interesting to beginning readers. Syd Hoff's colorful pictures on every page add to the pleasure that earlier readers found in *Danny and the Dinosaur*, *Oliver, Julius* and other Hoff books. Children will find that taking Chester to their hearts makes good horse sense, as Chester himself would say. A

MUD PIES AND OTHER RECIPES. *By Marjorie Winslow. Illustrated by Erik Blegvad. Macmillan, 1961. \$2.50. (5-8)*

Probably never before in the history of the making of children's books has there been written recipes for what boys and girls have made since time immemorial. The mock-serious tone of the recipes is just right for children to see immediately the fun of the book although adults may find it a bit coy at times. Stuffed sea shells, roast rocks, molded moss salad, sawdust cake, and tossed leaf salad are just a few of the gourmet foods suggested. The illustrator has caught the spirit of fun and his pictures add to the pleasure of the book.

A

#### BIOGRAPHY

THE RISE AND FALL OF ADOLF HITLER. *By William L. Shirer. Illustrated with photographs. Random, 1961. \$1.95. (10-16)*

The famous American correspondent who covered Berlin for many years has written an informative, dramatic biography of the evil genius who was Hitler. The theme of this portrayal is the corruption of power. Four major sections of the book describe "The Rise of Hitler," "Hitler Conquers Germany," "Hitler Conquers Europe," "The Fall of Hitler." Shirer's biography of Hitler is a significant addition to *The Landmark Series*.

C

CRIME FIGHTER: AUGUST VOLLMER. *By Alfred E. Parker. Macmillan, 1961. \$3.00. (10-14)*

This biography of the world renowned expert in police administration is a stimulating portrayal of a man dedicated to crime prevention and the protection of people through the maintenance of law and order. Vollmer was responsible for establishing the first school for policemen, the first modern prison farm, the use of

the lie detector and even the first bicycle patrol which evolved into the squad car of today.

C

MARK TWAIN AND THE RIVER. *By Sterling North. Illustrated by Victor Mays. Houghton Mifflin, 1961. \$1.95. (12-16)*

The spell of the river always permeated Mark Twain's life. This influence is interwoven throughout an excellent portrayal of one of the world's literary giants. Real characters, real events and historically verifiable facts make North's book on Mark Twain a fine framework for the introduction to Twain's books.

C

#### SCIENCE

SPACE IN YOUR FUTURE. *By Leo Schneider. Illustrated by Gustav Schrotter. Harcourt, Brace, 1961. \$3.75. (10-14)*

Leo Schneider is a science teacher, and *Space In Your Future* does a splendid job of teaching. The world we live in, the solar system beyond, our galaxy and the universe are described. Vividly and logically the author conveys the concept of the immensity of space. Young scientists will enjoy their "tour" of an astronomical observatory and delight in their introduction to the astronomer's tools for studying what lies outside our world. Interesting experiments are provided throughout.

C

CATERPILLARS. *By Dorothy Sterling. Illustrated by Winifred Lubell. Doubleday, 1961. \$2.75. (8-12)*

"And what's a butterfly? At best, He's but a caterpillar, dressed."

With this quotation from John Gay, (1727), the author and illustrator introduce the reader to every facet of the caterpillar's life. There is a charm and gaiety to this book as well as authenticity and fact. The illustrations are to be prized.

C



(Continued from page 525)

### Educators Guide to Free Films

The twenty-first edition of this useful catalog contains over four thousand film listings, 683 of which are new. Films related to the Social Studies areas predominate. As usual, use of some of these free films raises questions about the purpose of the producer. Their suitability for the classroom may be questioned also.

This catalog is available from: Educators Progress Service, Randolph, Wisconsin. (\$9.00)

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### Children's Book Clubs

*Weekly Reader Children's Book Club*—  
Selections for October are:

*The Hole in the Tree* by Jean George,  
E. P. Dutton. (for "Early Readers")  
*The Far Frontier* by William O. Steele,  
Harcourt Brace. (for "Star Readers")

*Junior Literary Guild*—Selections for  
November are:

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years old:  
*The Fox Went out on a Chilly Night:*  
*An Old Song* illustrated by Peter Spier,  
Doubleday, \$2.95

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years old:  
*Camp-in-the-Yard* by Vivian L. Thompson,  
Holiday House, \$2.50

For boys and girls 9, 10 and 11 years old:  
*Island City: Adventures in Old New*  
*York* by Lavinia R. Davis, Doubleday,  
\$2.95

For girls 12 to 16 years old:  
*Stranger No More* by Iris Noble, Julian  
Messner, \$2.95

For boys 12 to 16 years old:  
*The Gray Sea Raiders* by Gordon D.  
Shirreffs, Chilton, \$2.95

### NCTE Requests Curriculum Bulletins

Copies of new curriculum guides, courses of study, and other materials designed to improve the teaching of English are requested at NCTE Headquarters for the new curriculum library. Curriculum bulletins are being reviewed by a special NCTE Committee. Many guides will be displayed during the Philadelphia Convention. NCTE members are urged to send copies of newly developed materials to national headquarters.

### NCTE Establishes Book Collection on Teaching of English

A national library of books about aspects of English teaching is being established at the new NCTE Headquarters in Champaign, Illinois. Because many important books related to curriculum and methodology in English and the language arts are now out of print, the Council welcomes gifts and affixes to each a special label indicating the name of the donor. The first substantial gift is a collection of works from the library of Porter Perrin, Professor of English, University of Washington and past president of the Council. For information, write the Executive Secretary, NCTE, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois.

# VIKING JUNIOR BOOKS

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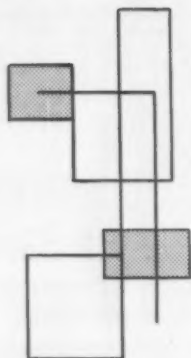
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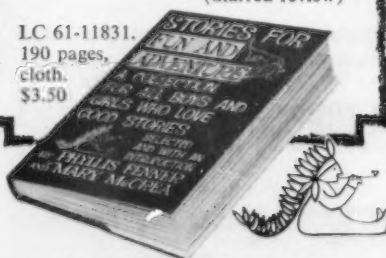
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